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JESUS

A Modern Study

JESUS

A MODERN STUDY

By Henry Frank

Author of *Modern Light on Immortality; The Doom of Dogma; Psychic Phenomena, Science and Immortality; etc. etc.*

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To My Wife
FRIEND, HELPER, INSPIRER

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PREFATORY NOTE

More than a quarter of a century ago the author of the present treatise published a book entitled *The Doom of Dogma and Triumph of Truth*. The purpose of that effort was to trace the doctrines of Christian theology to their natural and mythological sources, clothed with a new interpretation in the light of modern thought.

Prompted by the same spirit the author has in the present effort undertaken to carry on a similar thesis with considerably more detail and elaboration. This treatise, however, relates not so much to theological interpretation as to the historical origin of the Christian concept.

Already in the former work the author had indicated the paganistic sources from which Paul had acquired his inspiration to overthrow effete Judaism and inoculate mankind with the principles of a universal religion composed of a fusion of the esoteric, mystical substance of all the ethnic and historic faiths.

The emphasis of the present work is not, then, an examination of the doctrines of Christian theology but rather a search for the actual historic origin of the Gospel narratives; for the place Paul occupies in the founding and establishment of the Christian church; for the mysterious "secret" which Paul insisted was for the first time divulged and explained by himself; for the instrumentality of the ancient Jewish Scriptures as the source from which were derived the characteristics of that Personage portrayed in the Gospels and known to us as Jesus Christ; for the manner of the transmutation of the mythical deities of paganism into the humanized deity known through the ages as the Son of God; for an apprehension

of the transformation of the mystical abstractions of the pagan religions into their concrete realization in human manifestation.

The conclusions reached in the present volume are confessedly revolutionary. It has long been suspected and sometimes boldly asserted (as by Friederich Strauss, the famous theologian of the nineteenth century, and by Georges Brandes, the eminent Danish critic and philosopher), that the entire story of Jesus as recorded in the four Gospels is a pure myth and the Gospels themselves palpable forgeries (*Appendix A*).

Agreeing, in principle, with these deductions we attempt in this treatise to enter into a detailed and meticulous investigation of the historical procedure by which the myth (which, long before the Christian era, had been adumbrated in the pagan "mystery religions") was transmuted into the triumphant advent of the Jesuan legend.

The history of Christianity, as shown in this review of its origination, illustrates how from its inception to the zenith of its triumphs, the intense ardor of an heroic individual, maddened by a psychological vision, swept from the mass mind of humanity its clarity of thought and guidance of reason, till the whole world became a bedlam of infuriated religiosity, whose febrile effects are not yet assuaged in the breasts of humankind.

That individual was Saul of Tarsus, a "Hebrew of the Hebrews," versed in the occult "mysteries" of Mithraism and other pagan cults, who, suddenly dazzled by a vision of universal religion, instituted an intellectual and spiritual syncretism of pagan and Jewish lore, which had theretofore never been conceived by human genius.

The sway of Paul's power was away from Judaism directly toward Gentilism. "Nothing but the fragmentary writings of St. Paul," says Dr. Jowett *(The Epistles of St. Paul)*, "would conceal from us the fact that here was a concerted and continuous opposition . . . In all these epistles we have

proofs of a reaction to Judaism, but, though they are addressed to churches chiefly of Gentile origin, never of a reaction to Heathenism."

Here Dr. Jowett strikes at the root of the subject which constitutes the burden of the discussion in the following pages. There was indeed no reaction to "heathenism," or gentilism, among the Gentile members of Paul's churches and the early Christians, because Paul, on the one hand, had, by the magic touch of his logic and eloquence, caused Judaism as an integral faith forever to dissolve, and, on the other hand, had reclothed Paganism in Hebraic garments unrecognizable by the most learned rabbans of synagogue or Sanhedrin.

HENRY FRANK

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JESUS

A Modern Study

JESUS: A MODERN STUDY

CHAPTER I

THE STORY OF JESUS ACCORDING TO MARK

MESSIANIC TRADITIONS AND ADVENTURES—PSYCHOLOGY AND EVOLUTION OF THE MARKAN JESUS

Once the alluring ideal whom Paul proclaimed as the Divine Hero of his epic was accepted by the original disciples of the lowly Galilean or Nazarene, legends and rumors concerning His phenomenal advent and miraculous achievements began rapidly to circulate among the people. Some person, undoubtedly, at that time appeared in whom was discerned the promised fulfillment of Messianic hope which attracted to Him crowds of excited and eager followers.

In Mark's Gospel we probably have the first literary presentation of the popular reaction to this event, with the least exaggerated coloring compared with the other Gospel records.

Among the Jews of that age there prevailed a feverish expectancy of the appearance of One for whom the centuries had been waiting. The air was full of rumor and gossip. Pretenders were rampant and numerous; revolutions and insurrections sprung spontaneously from the soil of Palestine. False Messiahs, false prophets, were on every hand. Some felt the cut of the sword, some the conviction of Roman courts, some imprisonment or banishment, some the agony of the cross.

As today the mass of workers is divided into two camps, the one urging peaceful procedure to the end that their aims may be accomplished, the other framing a platform of direct action and warlike methods; so, in that age, the Hebrew people were divided into two parties—the party of Shammai and the party of Hillel—the one furious and vengeful, the other patient and hopeful. The school of Shammai is bent upon stirring the soul of Judea with burning hatred which at last brings the suffering race to national destruction and world-wide dispersion. Shammai and his zealots are annihilated; the people, carrying the scars of punishment and obloquy on their bodies and souls are scattered among the "heathen" whom they so bitterly despise. The school of Hillel alone survives, consisting chiefly of apocalyptic dreamers who in time will fill the ghettoes of an uncharitable and persecuting world.

Already in the closing days of Jewish nationalism there are swarms of prophet-priests and lay preachers proclaiming the millennium and assuring the age the Redeemer was at hand. A divine madness is on their brow; a wild illumination in their eyes. To understand the period in which the Hero of the Gospels appears we must "picture to ourselves" says Dujardin, "wonder-workers, healers of beasts and men, wandering from town to town, living by begging . . . surrounded by a troop of followers recruited from the lowest classes of society and practicing divination as well as healing. Their minds exalted and believing themselves to be in close relation with their God they call themselves His spokesmen; that is, they give themselves the title of prophet on the same ground that they grant it to the great classic prophets—Elisha and Elijah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah—their models."

The people are overwhelmed with fear and wonder and easily persuaded. Therefore a Theudas gathers a multitude to his banners only to be disillusioned when its leader is beheaded. A John the Baptist is able to assemble such multi-

tudes to hear him that even a king on his throne fears for his life and is not at ease till the head of the prophet lies at his feet.

A Galilean Judas, feverishly proclaiming the Jewish state as a republic, defiant of Rome, accountable to God alone, who alone rules and whose laws are supreme, so arouses revolt as to alarm the authorities and necessitate his capture and the destruction of his followers.

A Jesus, hailing from the same tumultuous Galilee, moves the multitude with a theme so unwarlike and strangely benign in those troublous times as to cause even the elders of the synagogue to wonder whence He acquired His wisdom. Yet, even He, too, though His preachment is so irenic, must endure death on the cross to allay the political fears aroused by intemperate revolutionists.

In the midst of this insurrectionary confusion and tenacious revolt comes suddenly news from the East that the day of deliverance is at hand, that Jews and Judaizers, alike, shall be redeemed from the yoke of Rome and the "body of sin" by faith in One whom "God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood." A curious, startling, revolutionary doctrine which must fight its way to recognition, and finally centre around one individual only among all those who were struggling for a triumphant hearing; one individual, to be known in history by a name Paul first acclaims: namely, Jesus the Christ! And the story of Jewish reaction to this amazing proclamation of one who had been heretofore a Hebrew of the Hebrews, breathing out slaughter and vengeance on all heretics, constitutes the burden of the canonical Gospels of which probably that of Mark is the first to have been published.

And so with modern eyes we discern in this Gospel the portraiture of a man, reflecting Paul's metaphysical ideal, built up on rumors that were bruited for half a century to a century previous to the time in which the author of

Mark's Gospel is writing; presenting a story so far afield from secular corroboration or historical verification as, ever since, to leave a depressing doubt in the minds of all unbiased and serious investigators.

And whoever wrote the Gospel of Mark achieved a *tour de force* in biographical brevity and picturesque characterization. In the light of this narrative the hero becomes slowly conscious of an irrepressible and annoying urge towards some vague ideal, while He joins a beggarly crowd of curiosity seekers or Messianic expectants, bent on listening to the austere voice of one who, clothed like the ancient prophets, had come out of the wilderness to warn the people to "repent and prepare for the kingdom of heaven which is at hand." Pricked by the stern rebukes and the crude eloquence of this uncouth agitator Jesus falls at his feet and begs baptism by the dark-visaged apocalyptic teacher, and as He rises from the water He thinks the mysterious voice of the urge within Himself is a voice from heaven commending Him as a chosen leader of His people, a Son of God who shall redeem the wretched world condemned to poverty and spiritual enslavement. Yet so startled is He on hearing this seemingly heaven-descended voice, a temporary fright seizes Him, and He runs away into the wilderness to contemplate His fate and reassure Himself.

There He remains for a long while, fighting out, with His own conscience and the invading psychology of terror, a battle which finally gives Him the victory over Himself, which sends Him back again into the world to reveal to recalcitrant opponents as well as submissive followers the realization of His calling, and to extend to them an invitation to enter with Him into the long-awaited but misapprehended kingdom, by bearing the cross of affliction and enduring with Him all manner of suffering which awaits them.

He warns them that though His yoke is easy, their fate shall not be pleasant; while, on the one hand, He assures them

that they may handle poisonous reptiles uninjured, if they have faith, on the other hand they shall not escape the mortal doom which is destined to befall those who have the courage to enter into the kingdom. "Blessed are ye when men persecute you and say all manner of evil against you," He exclaims.

However, at first He halted at the demand of duty under the spell of His high calling, and so long as John preached He followed him as a faithful pupil; not until "John was delivered up" did "Jesus come into Galilee preaching the Gospel of God." Hence His early discipleship is uneventful; He hangs chiefly upon the lips of the Baptist, who is so widely acclaimed by admiring multitudes. He is not yet aware that He himself is to become a spiritual cynosure attracting a greater multitude than ever John did and exercising power far vaster than that of His teacher. Yet there must have been something about His personality, His presence, His spirit, which especially attracted the attention of the mighty John, who singles Him out as one whose baptism shall avail far more than his own, for while he baptized with water, this promising disciple will baptize them with fire from heaven. In spite of His modesty and retirement, perhaps not yet clearly discerning the path of His labors, the famous John hails Him as one "the latchet of whose shoes" he is "unworthy to unloose."

But at length the door of destiny opens. Hideous news rends the air; the noble John, whom Jesus so much admired and afterwards shall acclaim as one greater than any who has been born of woman, has been seized and beheaded by the detested Herod. It seems at that moment the profound but inarticulate Spirit which had lain silent for so long in the breast of the young disciple of John burst forth in vigor, and without a moment's hesitancy He steps into John's shoes crying as he did "Repent; the kingdom of heaven is at hand; believe in the Gospel!"

Anon His latent powers awake and tentatively reassure Him. He tests His courage and inspiration by seeking to arouse sympathetic enthusiasm in others; He commands strangers whom He passes to relinquish their vocations and unhesitatingly to follow Him; he who had sat at the tax gatherer's desk shall now gather souls for God; they who had been fishers of the finny denizens of the sea shall now become fishers of men! Perhaps He is surprised at their instantaneous response: Simon and his brother Andrew, and James and John the sons of Zebedee, and others, till a spiritual body-guard of twelve sturdy souls is summoned to His side, who shall be His humble disciples and wavering supporters until the tragic denouement of the pathetic drama.

He boldly enters the synagogue at Capernaum to worship and is seized with a spirit of prophecy, advancing such amazing doctrine as to cause the worshippers to strain their ears and marvel at the wisdom which falls from the lips of this ordinary carpenter. A discussion loud and wordy at once begins and a nervous lunatic present is so overcome with excitement that he shouts aloud: "This man is the Holy One for whom all Israel is waiting."

Stunned at the declaration, which mayhap suggests in His soul a prophetic possibility, Jesus orders the lunatic to be silent lest the suggestion prejudice his hearers. In after years, rumor reporting the incident, asserted that the Nazarene had ordered the "unclean spirit" to come out of the lunatic; and in Mark's Gospel we find it so recorded.

At eve, after a day of arduous labors, He retires to Simon Peter's house to rest but finds Peter's mother-in-law seriously ill. It seems to Him a favorable opportunity to try His powers, and taking her hand in His He causes the fever to subside and restores the woman to perfect health. Thus encouraged by preliminary experiments He makes bold to invite everybody to come to Him for relief from distressful maladies. So rapidly does rumor spread the story of His achievements that

erelong the entire city is at the door of the house where He is stopping. Every manner of disease—physical, mental, neurotic, the lame, the halt, the blind, the stammering, the bewitched—yield to the magic of His touch. He attempts to run to other cities to escape the smothering throng that gathers round Him but, in vain; His reputation has gone before Him.

One day a man with palsy reaches forth his trembling, withered arm and begs relief. Jesus, perhaps scarcely realizing what He is saying, replies to the patient, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." But this assertion so horrifies the crowd some among them rebuke Him for assuming a prerogative which God alone possesses. Then, having committed Himself, he seems to think it wiser to defend His presumptive authority than to beat a retreat. Calmly, therefore, He answers: "Which is easier to say to the sick; 'Thy sins are forgiven'; or, 'Arise, take up thy bed and walk'?"

He is becoming bolder in His claims; experience is revealing secret powers of which He knew not. Rumor does not lag in multiplying His virtues and occult susceptibilities until all manner of miracles are ascribed to Him. His eyes appear to the multitude to glow with unwonted light; His voice is like the echo of thunder before which even demons pale and flee in fright; His immediate foes—the priests, scribes and Pharisees—are terrorized and filled with envy. What is He but a disciple of Beelzebub, they sneer; by this chief of devils this upstart casts out devils! At this the young prophet finds His voice and logically replies, "Can Satan cast out Satan?"

Silenced by such wit the enemy hesitates to taunt Him further.

Daily His fame is spreading; daily He grows more conscious of powers He did not realize He possessed.

Confident at last that this enduement of power is the gift of the Holy Spirit, He assumes the supreme self-conscious prerogative and despite the scurrilous allegation of envious

scribes and Pharisees, He pronounces the unforgivable sin; all other sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, all other blasphemy wherewith they shall blaspheme, save this sin alone: namely, the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. And what is that? Why should it alone among all the sins of men entail upon its perpetrator everlasting and unrelenting punishment? Because that sin is a reflection upon the source whence this prophet secures His powers. Cursed forever is he who dares insinuate that other than the Spirit of God sponsors and inspires the sanctified Carpenter of Nazareth!

Already the first intimation of that madness that shall finally fetch Him to the cross becomes apparent. "Whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness; and this is that blasphemy by which you durst demean me by denying to me the agency of the Holy Ghost in my occult achievements. Beware!" When Mark records this incident he almost reveals to us the eye of the prophet shot with glittering condemnation. They ascribe my powers to Beelzebub, do they? Cursed be they forever. This "Because they said, 'he hath an unclean spirit.' "

Daily He is becoming more and more conscious of assumed prerogatives which tradition had attributed to God alone. Natural human affection seems to be neutralized by a nascent realization of His widening importance; henceforth He cannot be circumscribed by the restrictions of the fireside or the restraints of human relationship. He hears that His mother is present on the outer edge of the crowd He is addressing; and He at once endears Himself to the listening multitude by exclaiming: "My mother, who is she? My brother, who is he? My sister, who is she? Behold, whoever doeth the will of my Father, the same is my brother and sister and mother!" These are His true relatives, knit not by the ties of the vulgar flesh but by the invisible umbilicus of the Holy Spirit. Why, then, should His mother, a mere human, fleshly relative, have

greater claim upon Him than those who are begotten by Him of the Spirit, soul of His soul, offspring of His sufferings?

Existence reveals new phases; the world has taken on a new aspect. He is no longer a mere human being, subject to the ignorance and limitation of humanity. The lunatics may have spoken more wisely than they knew. It dawns upon Him that He holds the solution of the mystery of life; and He hints to His disciples that He will in secret divulge to them the meaning of this mystery; "the mystery of the kingdom of God." Pressed to divulge this secret to His ignorant followers He expounds a parable whose ostensible meaning even the least informed among them might have divined. He, Jesus, is the sower of the seeds of Truth; but no sooner does He sow them than His great enemy, Satan, comes around and pulls up the seed before it can take root; some there are whose nature is but rocky soil on which when the seeds fall they remain to perish; some have souls of thorns which choke out the seeds once they begin to germinate; some there are who are good ground which accept the seed and nurture it till it bears fruit thirtyfold or a hundredfold.

Thus He gratifies the eager curiosity of His seemingly feeble-minded followers and assures them that they alone are vouchsafed a knowledge of the mystery whose meaning is withheld from those "without" lest haply they may repent and be made beneficiaries of the secret. They are chosen to learn the mystic key of the kingdom; but others even though they see shall not perceive, and though they hear shall not understand. Therefore, the outer world shall receive only mystifying parables, a closed book never to be opened for them. However, the "mystery" of all the parables is so simple and easily read that one marvels at the naïveté of the narrator.

Each day witnesses new powers vouchsafed the Gospel Hero: He has the capacity of ordering evil spirits to depart from the bodies which they curse, and if they wail and protest He

drives them down the mountain side where they inoculate the bodies of innocent swine which becoming crazed dash themselves into the sea!

The whole world seems to be rapidly falling at the hero's feet. Even the proud priests are so impressed they are anxious for His blessings. An austere president of the synagogue kneels before Him and begs Him to save his daughter threatened with death.

And to the astonishment of this aristocratic Hebrew this magician has such influence over his afflicted daughter that she rises from apparent death, walks normally round the room and asks for something to eat!

On another occasion a woman plagued with a bleeding disease grovels through the curious crowd which surrounds the Preacher and by the mere touch of her hand to the edge of His garment she is instantly healed of her suffering. Ignorant of her presence He nevertheless discerns the passing of a stream of divine energy from His breast and realizes that a miracle has been achieved.

Grown now so assured of faith in Himself, He inspires His immediate disciples with the belief that all things will come to them through prayer and trust in Him. He sends them boldly forth without price to secure shelter, food and a bed in any household they choose to enter. And a curse shall fall upon that house that refuses them their needs. The growing consciousness of superhuman authority becomes more and more intense as His ministry continues. The world is melting about Him; principalities are bending; thrones begin to tremble. The great king Herod hears of the hero's magical accomplishments and is horrified lest this strange and mysterious person be none other than John the Baptist risen from his grave to avenge himself for his ignominious death.

Even inferior forms of life and inanimate substances—the waves of the ocean, birds in the air and fishes in the sea—all become submissive to His will. The very elements lend them-

selves to His control. Are the thousands who through the long day have been listening to His preaching grown suddenly hungry; why do not the disciples feed them? Alas, they grieve that they cannot because of the want of food. But five loaves of bread and two fishes are all they possess; how can they feed thousands with so short a supply? The Master wonders at their strange want of vision. He by the magic of His word allays their fear and embarrassment, causing the paltry loaves and fishes to multiply before their very eyes; so that when the vast multitude has all been fed many basketfuls still remain over.

Nothing is impossible with God or His Messenger!

The beating wings of the tempest drop calmly at sea when He commands. Caught in a storm the disciples behold Him approaching on the waves to their rescue, walking like a ghost! Terrified, He calmly reassures them and laughs at their want of faith and stupid amazement. Is He not empowered by the will of His Father in heaven? Why should He not sway the wind and control the ocean's waves as He chooses?

His self-confidence has now attained such a height He can face the bitterest and most captious of His critics and easily crush them with His taunting wit. They are hypocrites, honoring God only with their lips; vain worshippers—despisers of the true meaning of God's word as His Representative reveals it. Accused of permitting His disciples to sit at table and eat without first washing their hands, He scorns their hygienic captiousness and assures His friends that nothing can defile the body which enters it from without—only the things that go out of the body can defile it; foolish are the physiological demands of cleanliness when the spirit itself is always immaculate, however base the body. Not the meat one devours defiles one, for it enters not the heart but the belly; it is the evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness, lasciviousness, deceit and wickedness—these are the things that come out of the heart and defile the body.

Thus does the biographer impute his own want of scientific knowledge as well as his historic inaccuracy to his hero, making after ages wonder that the Incarnate should appear ignorant of what now is commonly known. For if Jesus were a Jew He would not untruthfully advise His biographer to assert such foolish things about the Jews; for "who can imagine," says Dr. B. W. Bacon, "that this explanation (about ceaseless washing of hands, etc.), exaggerated and contemptuous as it is, was either written by one of Jewish proclivities, or required by readers familiar with the tenets and practices of Judaism?"[1] Nor can one imagine that the Incarnate, endowed with God's omniscience, could be uninformed of the circulation of the blood and its derivation from the food we eat.

Suddenly He is called upon to solve a knotty problem relating to racial integrity and traditional predilection. He is a Jew and should despise a Greek; for the chosen people must not be defiled by other races nor show them undue favors. Yet now at His feet grovels a wretched barbarian woman pleading that the great magician relieve her daughter, writhing in the grip of a painful disease. In an instant He perceives the folly of racial divisiveness and grants the woman the favor she seeks, not, however, with complete generosity, for He first humbles her to the indignity of dogs eating crumbs from their masters' tables before He yields. Nevertheless, when the weeping woman returned to her home she found that "the demon had gone out of her daughter" and she was restored to perfect health.

After many days of wandering with His disciples even to the gates of Sidon and Decapolis, everywhere achieving unwonted miracles, at last He takes his three most intimate followers, Peter, James and John, into a high mountain, and there causes them to visualize Himself enrobed in white, shining garments, more glistening than "any fuller on earth could

[1] *Beginnings of Gospel History.*

whiten them''; and lo, to His side, He summons Moses and Elijah, in heaven these thousand years! Transported with joy, yet terrorized, the disciples bend their eyes to the earth contemplating their rapture and resolving to erect three tabernacles on the spot commemorative of this vision, when, again lifting their heads they see none but Jesus, alone, enshrouded in a cloud out of which came a voice crying: ''This is my beloved Son; hear ye Him.''

Of course the biographer does not here intimate that this vision was a possible psychological phenomenon, as it might well have been in the light of our present scientific knowledge, but presents it as an actual transfiguration, sanctioned and sponsored by God's own voice.

Even the heavens are becoming subject to the beck of this marvelous Man who can cause voices to vibrate from the skies and before men's very eyes mould human figures, which resemble historic characters, out of the ethereal substance of the heavens.

For days and months Jesus and His disciples continue to wander over the soil of Palestine everywhere exhibiting His extraordinary powers. The blind, even though so born, are made to see, the lame to throw away their crutches and walk unembarrassed, withered arms to be restored, the dying and dead to be reclaimed, till confusion and amazement overcome His followers.

But anon He foresees His doom; the murmur of warning is in His speech; they are fast approaching the hour when all shall end in tragedy. He foresees that He is to be killed; buried in the ground; but after three days He shall arise and the living world shall again behold Him! To the Jewish ears of His disciples there would, of course, have been nothing familiar in this curious declaration; but to pagan ears it might have been perhaps a commonplace. For similar records had been made of resurrections in the traditional writings of exotic races. Almost identical situations had been narrated of Mith-

ras, Osiris, Attis, Adonis and others.[2] Of course, a Jewish biographer of Jesus would have been unaware of this and have recorded it as unique and unparalleled in history. For Jesus has discovered in His own prophetic soul and in the ancient Scripture the foreknowledge of His own fate. He knows that He shall not only be slain but deserted by His most faithful followers. Horrified, they disclaim such treachery; yet He knows that even the most vigorous protester of loyalty, Peter, the prince of the apostles, will fail when the acid test is applied.

Nor has He long to wait; the prophecy is about to be fulfilled; the betrayer is in their midst and sits at table with them, and even now is designated by Jesus as they dip their bread in the sacred wine.

The day of doom arrives. The betrayer leads the Pharisaical priests to some secret place where Jesus and His friends had gone to converse and pray. He is seized and ruthlessly dragged to the High Priest who holds solemn court and insists on the victim answering whether He had claimed to be "the Son of the Blessed whom His followers call the Christ." Though at first stubbornly silent at last He yields confirming the accusation.

Here the evangelist lends but little coloring to the future legend that the Christ is the Son of God endued with powers equal to those of the Infinite. He permits his hero merely to acknowledge that He is the Son of God in such a sense as to cause the High Priest to condemn Him for blasphemy. According to the ancient Jewish law blasphemy might have been imputed to Him for assuming prerogatives which were presumed to belong to God alone, thus taking the name of God in vain. This called for the Mosaic penalty of stoning to death.

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[2] For a fine summary of Christian and Pagan parallels see J. M. Robertson's *Pagan Christs;* also Frazer's *Golden Bough* and Doane's *Bible Parallels.*

Yet the narrator records no such logical event, in the purview of Jewish jurisprudence, but for some reason not explained records a strange procedure. Although the High Priest had judged the culprit to be a blasphemer, under the law of the Sanhedrim, judgment is not executed on Him, but he is brought before Pontius Pilate to be tried not upon an ecclesiastical charge but a political one.

Suddenly the nature of the alleged culprit's crime is transformed from blasphemy, punishable according to Jewish law, with death by stoning, to treason, punishable under Roman law, by crucifixion. Here the account becomes curiously inconsistent and confusing. Nowhere else in the narrative had the Evangelist even intimated that Jesus had organized an insurrection among the rabble that would, if successful, place Him on the throne as King of the Jews.

When the ragged and fanatic mob went before Him singing hosannas as He entered Jerusalem on a donkey, they called Him merely "the Son of David," who would establish the kingdom of God. "The kingdom of our father David," which the marching rabble acclaimed, was not, as all the disciples knew, a prospective political kingdom, but one "not of this world." The narrator, however, would apparently have us infer that the priestly accusers overlooked this seemingly well-known fact and chose to accuse the prisoner of high treason for claiming to be a rebel plotting to establish a kingdom within the Roman Republic. Pilate himself is amazed that they should bring their religious disputes to him for settlement, as he was not of their faith, yet he yields in a cowardly manner permitting a palpably innocent man to be ignominiously executed: a procedure quite contrary to the prevalent justice of Roman law.

Thus, though previously in this Gospel the Jews had been made to appear bold or sometimes sulking enemies of the Christ, attempting in every way to drag Him into confessing violations of the laws of the Sanhedrim or the synagogue,

when at last, they get Him to confess to what they allege is blasphemy, they fail to judge Him according to the laws of their own ecclesiastical jurisdiction, which was permitted under the Empire, and resort to a Roman court for final judgment. One wonders why. Why has the Roman cross and not the lethal stone of the Mosaic code been raised to such high renown? Why, from this on, does the story assume such a strange pagan aspect? Why does the story of the Crucifixion of Jesus run so curiously similar to the stories telling of crucifixions in pagan forms of worship? (*See Appendix B.*)

Why, again, one must ask, was the accusation against Jesus by the Jews abruptly altered, according to the account in the Gospels, from blasphemy to treason, when, thus far in the narrative, Jesus had not been revealed as an enemy of Rome but wholly as a reformer and an agitator against the narrowness and bigotry of the Mosaic literalists and Pharisaical legalists? He had proved Himself no political rebel against the prevailing powers, or indicated that He intended to establish an autonomous kingdom under the Roman æges; but, on the contrary He had said distinctly: "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's."

May we, however, discern a logical hint of the source from which the writer of the Markan gospel derived his notion of the Crucifixion as an essential feature of the story of Jesus, in Paul's declaration to the Galatians: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law . . . for it is written, 'Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.' "

It will perhaps not be necessary to pause here and anticipate our deductions, more than to note that at this juncture in the Markan narrative we seem to discover the possibility of the construction of the gospel drama, especially in its most essential characteristic, out of the suggestions enumerated in Paul's several epistles.

Paul, being the first to publish to the world the ignominious

death of the Christ—a death also attributed to most of the Savior prophets of the pagan East—his writings may have afforded the source of all the material on which the Gospels were built.

This, however, for the moment, remains a mere suggestion to be more seriously discussed in detail in future chapters.

There may be more than even he contemplated in Dr. B. W. Bacon's statement: namely, "The Paulinism of Mark is supremely manifest in the Evangelist's whole conception of what constitutes the apostolic message."

To show how possibly the entire drama of the gospel narratives might have been evolved from Paul's writings, which as Dr. Bacon avers are "by far the oldest documents in the New Testament, whose authenticity is practically undisputed, and which afford a cross section of Christian belief, institutions and practices in the *Greek speaking* churches fully a *score of years* before the earliest Gospel was written," let us proceed to examine each of these Gospels in more detail with this object in view. (Italics mine.)

CHAPTER II

SUGGESTIVE OMISSIONS IN MARK'S NARRATIVE

THE VIRGIN BIRTH—RESURRECTION OF JESUS—THE SPURIOUS ADDENDUM

John Mark, presumptively the first of the four Evangelists who ventured to publish a biography of the Man of Galilee, presents a simple, unorderly tale, hurriedly throwing together incidents and sayings in the Master's life, only slightly garnished with supernatural elements as compared with the subsequent narratives.

He knows, for instance, nothing of the Virgin birth. Regarding Jesus with apparently unidolatrous Jewish eyes, he recognizes in his hero but another Hebrew prophet or reformer with scarcely more of a supernatural halo than that which crowned the heads of the ancient classic Hebrew teachers.

Had there been no other narrative than that of Mark, manifestly the troublous doctrine of the Virgin birth of the Savior would not have perplexed theologians throughout the history of Christendom. Whence then did the story of the supernatural origin of the Savior arise and why is it omitted from the pages of the first Gospel?

Modern Criticism assures us of the probability that there was a common documentary source upon which the authors of the Synoptic Gospels depended chiefly for their material. To prove this an author contends that "if the additional matter in Matthew and Luke be omitted, there will be found remaining in each of them, with comparatively very few ex-

ceptions, the contents of Mark given in exactly the *same order*. This seems clearly to point to a common document.[1]

Admitting this, then how can we explain the omission of the very important event of a virgin mother giving birth to the Incarnate Son? If this assumed fact was stated in the alleged original common document [2] from which the Gospels derived, then how shall we account for Mark's neglect to present so important an event as the birth of the Savior by a virgin mother?

If it was not found in that document then are we to accuse Matthew and Luke of having invented it? Either horn of the dilemma is of course perplexing to literalistic interpreters of the Bible. If Mark could take the liberty of ignoring it, because possibly it would be offensive to the constituency to whom his appeal was made, it shows he shaped the story as he chose, regardless of the supposed facts. If the story was not in the original document, then the introduction of the incident in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke likewise proves that they either fabricated it themselves, a point which we shall discuss later, or they accepted a rumor or bit of gossip that was bruited after Mark's Gospel had appeared. Either view of the matter is disconcerting to authoritarian advocates of the credibility of the Gospels.

Again, Mark knows but little of the pivotal doctrine of the Resurrection of Jesus from the grave. He refers to this alleged event in the life of his hero but vaguely, timidly. It is to him,

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1 Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible:* art., "The Gospels."

2 "If Mark only occasionally used this source . . . why should he have copied the few sayings so differently from Matthew and Luke, and why should he have passed by so much genuine and valuable material in a book he deemed worthy of use? . . . If such a book existed, coming with the authority of an apostle, and commending itself so highly to the Evangelists that they actually copied from it the words of Jesus, is it likely that the result should have been the numerous variants in the simplest sayings and the peculiar selection of material? It is difficult to avoid the impression that forces have been at work in the production of our Gospels that would have been checked if the method had been that of merely copying a common, authoritative document" (Schmidt's *The Prophet of Nazareth*, p. 228).

apparently, a mere rumor that emanated from the lips of a social outcast whom Jesus had befriended and who was enamoured of him, and who, with Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Salome, had first discovered the empty tomb. In a gasping, frightened way, according to Mark, they reported that the body of "the Crucified One" had disappeared from the tomb from which the closing rock had been rolled away, after Joseph of Arimathea had laid it there, and that a young man dressed all in white within the tomb had told them that "Jesus had risen." With this bare hint of a vague rumor Mark suddenly ends his narrative. The oldest manuscripts of Mark made no reference to the marvelous tale as told in later accounts of Christ disappearing in the clouds as He swept into heaven. We must not overlook the admitted fact that verses 9 to 19 in our present version of the sixteenth chapter are spurious or forgeries. Mark's original composition closes with the strange words, referring to the women who were said to have discovered the empty tomb, "And they said nothing to any one, for they were afraid." Thus what was to become the central and commanding doctrine of Christendom, the resurrection from the grave of the human Savior, is but tentatively intimated in the first published account. Now, when Mark wrote his Gospel was that all he could learn about it from the alleged original document that is supposed to have been the primal source of the Gospel narratives? Apparently so. Else how shall we account for the fact that he makes only this slight reference to it, whereas the other narratives enlarge it in detail as an absolute historical event? Again, either Mark was culpable in treating so important an event so negligibly, or Matthew and Luke must be suspected of having invented the circumstantial evidence they present, or had gathered it from floating rumors which had filled the air after Mark's Gospel had appeared.

Here we must pause a moment to note that even before the first Gospel was published there was plenty of time for any

number of rumors and legends to circulate concerning this Jesus after His alleged crucifixion. Dr. Samuel Davidson thinks 120 A. D. is as near the true time as we can get for the date of the publication of the first Gospel. Bauer assigns the date about 115 to 120 A. D. Weiss proposes about 67 A. D. Dr. B. W. Bacon gives 70 A. D. as the probable date. "But when facts are so scanty and indications given in the writings themselves are of such uncertain interpretation, it remains a question only of greater or less probability."[3] If we accept the date nearest to the death of Jesus: namely, 67 A. D. (which as we have seen is probably all too early), even at that it must have been fully forty years after Jesus had expired and was buried before any published account of His career appeared. Knowing how pregnant is the imagination of man, especially when fraught with feverish religious excitement, we realize the probability of the mythical or legendary essence of the Gospel narratives.

Here we would interpose a question. Why should the three women who were the first to be informed (according to Mark) of the alleged rising of Jesus from the grave, have been frightened, so frightened that they did not dare to tell any one about their discovery? Jesus had foretold this event to the disciples. "The Son of Man is delivered unto the hands of men and they shall kill Him; and after that He is killed, He shall rise the third day."[4] Intimately associated with the disciples, these women must have been acquainted at least with a hint of the prophesied resurrection. However, let it be observed, in this first account the reference to the proposed resurrection is made to appear unintelligible to the disciples. "But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask Him."

Thus we see Mark merely wanders around the subject of the resurrection, flirting with it as it were. The time perhaps

[3] Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible.*
[4] Mark ix: 31.

had not yet arrived to present in public record anything more than a bare hint of the rumor of its occurrence. Mark no where records the actual event in his original composition. As I have already said only the final spurious verses refer to it as an actual, accomplished fact. Thus it must be apparent that at the time the original manuscript of Mark was published only a mere hint or suggestion of the resurrection was current in the popular belief. If it was generally understood to have been an actual occurrence, Mark would have stated it positively and without equivocation. But the time apparently was not yet ripe for its bold proclamation as an historical incident. Therefore in after years it became necessary for some literary editor to invent the spurious passages, where the resurrection is unequivocably set forth, that the glaring inconsistency with the other Gospels might not be discerned.

In the first published narrative, the "risen Christ" is merely a ghost—a young man all in white; His tomb is empty yet His presence is not recognized. But in the subsequent additions to this Gospel the "ghost" becomes flesh and blood; He is seen by many and eats and drinks with some of them. Thus we see that not until the popular mind had been sufficiently educated to receive the story of the resurrection as a reality did any narrator of Christ's career dare to assert it as a positive, demonstrated fact. But after the popular mind has become permeated with the rumor it is an easy task for some learned scholar of the church to lift the alleged event from the state of a nascent hint, a mere whisper as it were, to that of an accomplished fact replete with circumstantial evidence that apparently substantiates the original rumor. Mark merely informs us that a group of frightened women fled from the tomb too much astonished to say anything to anybody about it. But why they were frightened Mark does not say.

One would imagine that they would have rejoiced and exulted, having been the first to discover that Christ's positive

prophecy of the event [5] had been literally fulfilled. But one wonders whether they were made to appear frightened because they were the first from whose lips the rumor was to start. Or does Mark characterize their emotion as fear because he himself feared to give more than a bare hint or vague description of an event so stupendous that it becomes the pivot around which civilization revolves?

Nevertheless, whoever wrote the added spurious verses (in which the halting statements of Mark are converted into stalwart assertions) he performed his work so ingeniously that it has required years of scholarship to analyze and discover the "pious fraud." However, though for ages this redactor deceived the world, we now know he must have read the original manuscript quite carelessly and therefore fell into serious inconsistencies. For in verse 9 this apparently reckless writer says that "early the first day of the week" the risen Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene only and when she was alone; whereas the original manuscript had already informed us three women (Mary, the mother of James, and Salome, together with Mary Magdalene) had been the first to make the discovery when they had entered the tomb "very early the first day of the week," and saw, sitting to the right of the grave, the man in white who announced the resurrection.

Once more, this new editor or redactor of Mark stumbles into another error when he informs us that "Mary Magdalene went and told them that had been with Him, when they mourned and wept," for the original Mark had already assured us that she and the other two women were too palpably overcome to tell any one what they had seen. "Neither said they anything to any man for they were afraid."

And a third error of this redactor is detected in his omission of an important item which is referred to in both the original Mark and in Matthew. The "young man in white" (in the original manuscript) instructs the women that Jesus

[5] Mark ix: 31.

who "had risen" would meet the disciples in Galilee. Now, in the Matthew Gospel this instruction is faithfully carried out. But in the spurious addendum to the original Mark (xvi: 14) we are informed that the risen Christ meets His disciples, not in Galilee, but whilst they are enjoying a dinner elsewhere. Unless we are to regard the Son of Man as purely a mythical phenomenon we can scarcely believe that He was seen simultaneously at two widely separated places.

Moreover, a more serious inconsistency of the redactor is discerned by the introduction of wholly new matter not even hinted at by the original author of Mark, or even by Matthew. "So, then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God." Why did this new writer make such a startling statement no intimation of which had been even suggested by the original Markan writer? It must be evident that at the time the original Mark had been written no one had yet suggested this extraordinary phenomenon as a feature of Christ's career; indeed, it must have been a long time after the original Mark had appeared that the belated statement was appended. For, as I have already observed, even by the time Matthew's Gospel was made public the rumor of the ascension had not yet begun to be bruited. Nor, indeed, had it been heard of when, a long time after, Luke prepared his careful manuscript known as the third Gospel. For in the earliest of the Lukan manuscripts the reference to the ascension is not found.[6] This would indicate that an effort was being made to disseminate some rumor about the ascension after the first two Gospels had appeared, and that its sponsors succeeded in slipping it into the later manuscripts of the Lukan Gospel, but failed to insert it in the earlier ones. Then, by the time of the publication

[6] In the marginal note to Luke xxiv: 51, in the Revised Version of 1881, we read: "Some ancient authorities omit 'and was carried up into heaven.'" Thus the statement would end with the words "He parted from them."

of the Acts, evidently the acension had become recognized as an established historical fact and is there so recorded.

II

Our study thus far discloses how the Gospels were probably conceived and promulgated. They were evidently woven gradually out of rumor and legend (which, as I shall afterwards attempt to prove, probably originated from the doctrines introduced by Paul), and, in time, as the legends accumulated they became incorporated in a series of writings. We may detect how these accretions grew from sometimes very slight beginnings. For instance: the redactor of Mark's Gospel who added the spurious verses refers to Christ as "the Lord Jesus." Now in the original Mark no such appellation can be found. There, Jesus is addressed or referred to as merely Jesus, or Rabbi, or Master, or the Nazarene, or the Son of Man. It is true that once or twice there is a reference to Him as "the Son of God." But each time He is so addressed the words fall from the lips of lunatics or demented persons, indicating that when Mark wrote the time was not yet ripe to launch an appellation afterwards popularized. It will also be noted that whenever these lunatics proclaim Jesus as the Son of God He rebukes them and enjoins them to "hold their peace."[7]

Therefore, when the anonymous editor calls Him, without reservation, "the Lord Jesus," it shows that he must have written long after the doctrine of the Divinity of Jesus was popularly accredited. It is by such slight slips that we may detect how the Gospels were added to and grew out of popular rumor as gradually the fundamentals of the Christian creed were established.

But now returning to the body of the original Gospel of Mark, if it be granted, as most critics now admit, priority of

[7] Mark i: 25.

time over the other Gospels, there must have been a considerable period during which his was the only story of the Christ in circulation. In view of this fact, we would naturally surmise that the author would especially emphasize the supernatural advent and miraculous exit of his hero. The truth being, however, that those characteristically supernatural features which related to the parthenogenetical conception (Virgin birth) and bodily revivification after burial, which were incorporated in subsequent narratives, were omitted in the first narrative, or faintly intimated, would seem to indicate that they were not facts recognized at the time they were alleged to have occurred, but were primarily dim rumors which could not be boldly recorded at first, but must abide the time till the world was ready to receive them.

Apparently Mark is describing a character already well known to those whom he addresses. At least he writes as though his hero was well known; for he introduces Him void of all preliminaries, merely abruptly announcing "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ." [8]

Reading, then, Mark's Gospel alone we observe that in his time nothing apparently had yet been heard about the star in the heavens which guided the three wise men as narrated in later Gospels; nor of the angel who came to announce to the astonished mother-to-be of the Savior that the fruit of her womb would be begotten by the Holy Ghost and that motherhood would be forced on her despite her virginity. And of that triumphant climax, the sublime conquest of death, but a bare hint is given, while of the glorified ascension to heaven of a body already long enough in the ground to have become partially putrified, not one word is recorded.

All those wonderful tales, first revealed in the later Gospel of Matthew and enlarged upon in the still later Gospel according

[8] The words "Son of God," following this clause in the current version, are an admitted interpolation and are not found in the earliest Markan manuscripts. See marginal note in Revised Version of 1881 where this admission is indicated.

to Luke, relating to the supernatural introduction of a Divine Hero to a disbelieving world, and to His still more startling exit, are entirely unknown or overlooked by the pen that indited the Gospel according to Mark.

This could not have been accidental; for if those events were true and known in his day, if perchance they were already recorded in the supposed "common source" from which the three Synoptic Gospels derived, it is incredible that the writer of Mark should have ignored them.

Certainly he would need all the support that those tales would afford him to impress upon his readers, and upon a dubious world, the supreme authority of the superhuman character of whose nature and career he is the first to publish an account. That he makes no reference to them, logically compels the conclusion that he was ignorant of them.

But how could he have been ignorant of such a dramatization of supernatural events, if they were already well known in his time? If they were not then known, we are forced to insist upon an answer to the question: from what source did Matthew and Luke learn of them?

Let us not forget that Mark's Gospel frequently indulges in minute details (as, for instance, when he proffers the information that Jesus was hungry when He cursed the fruitless fig tree; that John's disciples used to fast whereas those of Jesus did not; that when curing a deaf man Jesus spat and put His fingers on the deaf man's ears). How then would it be possible for a biographer who meticulously mentions such negligible details to omit all information on the far more important supernatural features of his hero's character and career, especially as such characteristics and events, if already known among those with whom Jesus associated, would be most effective in convincing a repugnant and skeptical world?

The only possible way to explain such a disconcerting situation is to assume that the legends concerning the Virgin

birth and the resurrection and ascension had not yet arisen in Mark's time, or were as yet but feebly nascent rumors. Between the appearance of Mark's narrative and those of Matthew and Luke these stories must either have been invented or gradually emerged and were not incorporated in the subsequent biographies of Jesus till they had become sufficiently prominent in the popular mind. Having fed the masses for a certain period on the less startling "miracles," the crowd's credulity was ultimately prepared for the reception of the more extravagant tales which had slowly been disseminated. At least, I can conceive of no other sensible and logical deduction.

It is, of course, quite credible that some biographers might omit the mention of certain events which other biographers would have thought to be essential; but that any biographer should have ignored events so important and overawing, especially to his supposed coreligionists, as the bearing of a child by a virgin whose womb was impregnated by the Holy Ghost and of the ascension of a once buried but resurrected body into the heavens, and only indifferently refer to the alleged resurrection, in any detailed account of such a hero, especially in the first account to appear, is, I insist, beyond belief, except on the theory that they were unknown to the biographer; or, possibly, that they were not mentioned by him because the skeptical world was as yet insufficiently impressed by vague and floating rumors concerning them.

Finally, the impression one gains on reading the Gospel of Mark with an unbiased eye, is that it presents a brief summary of a series of confused and sometimes contradictory legends (as already indicated) which had been long in vogue but not yet assembled in one publication. It begins and ends abruptly, void of introduction or peroration.

It was doubtless for this reason that the spurious addendum was adjoined in after years. Rumors concerning one Jesus (possibly emanating from Paul's epistle, as I shall later

discuss) had been thickening for years. They were scattered abroad through many far-separated regions. The people were becoming increasingly curious, and as popular curiosity became acute it was found necessary to have these gathered together and built up into a unified story. This desire was undoubtedly what brought about the publication of numerous accounts, only four of which have been retained in the canon. Some apparently wrote for those already convinced or converted (and were therefore reckless in the fables they indulged, like the apochryphal narratives); others wrote for those who were ignorant or dubious and therefore required more careful accounts to convince or convert them.

It appears to me that Mark wrote, as indicated at least in the oldest manuscripts still extant, principally for those who were already followers of the vague hero launched on a wondering world by that semi-pagan, Greco-Hebrew, Saul of Tarsus. Therefore Mark's Gospel is a brief, unexpository summary. Matthew, as we shall show, wrote with the distinct purpose of converting the contentious and antagonistic Jews, from whose ranks the legendary hero is supposed to have arisen and therefore built up the life of his hero out of the material supplied by texts of the ancient Hebraic Scriptures.

CHAPTER III

HOW THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW WAS CONCEIVED AND CONSTRUCTED

SCANDALOUS INTIMATIONS OF CONTEMPORARY SKEPTICS—THE PROPHECY OF ISAIAH—WHY MATTHEW CALLED THE SAVIOR "JESUS" AND NOT "IMMANUEL"—MATTHEW'S RECKLESS USE OF OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE—MICAH'S PROPHECY—"THE VOICE IN RAMAH"—THE VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS—THE DARKNESS BEYOND JORDAN—PARABLES AND DARK SAYINGS—THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM—ALLEGED ASS WORSHIP AMONG ANCIENT JEWS—MASSACRE OF THE INFANTS—INSCRIPTIONS ON CROSS AT CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

Between the time of the appearance of the Gospel according to Mark and that of Matthew's Gospel a popular demand must have arisen for a more precise and detailed characterization of the Divine Hero. Mark, as I have said, projects his hero *in medias res,* void of preliminary introduction or historical background. Dubious minds must have asked, "Whence came He; who were His father and mother; who were His ancestors; where was He educated; who sponsored His training?" Mark states abruptly: "In those days, came Jesus of Nazareth and was baptized of John in the Jordan."

From this vague introduction it would seem that this name must have been already widely bruited about in popular legend; else something more definite by way of introduction would have been said of Him. He seems in Mark to have descended upon human vision from nowhere and nothing of

His origin or early years is vouchsafed us. But by the time the Matthew Gospel appears we find that much has been added to the legend and the hero is given a far more imposing setting.

Orthodox Jews and pagan skeptics had doubtless scoffed at this upstart Messiah or Christ, as a figure altogether too tenuous and visionary to be accepted as an historical person. At the very beginning we find gross insinuations and scandalous reference by many who refused to believe in the claims of the Gospel Hero. Because His origin and ancestry were originally unrevealed there were some who scornfully called Him "that anonymous one"—a man without a name or habitation; "that bastard" whose supposed mother was known but whose father had not been revealed.

Celsus, however, the eminent critic of that day, went so far as to indicate by name the "seducer" of the mother of Jesus and declares positively he was the real father of the Gospel Hero.

Such rumors or insinuations must of course have permeated the masses long before they became elements of permanent literature. Therefore in both Matthew and Luke we discern serious efforts to build up an historical background especially by tracing His line of ancestry that the base rumors as to His bastardy might be disproved. Thus Matthew ferrets out the long line of His ancestry, tracing Jesus as a direct descendant of Abraham; while Luke, who writes at a later period, not satisfied with Matthew's merely human ancestry, vouches for the ancestral lineage clear back to the first man, "Adam, the Son of God."

The eagerness of these defenders to prove that the new Messiah was neither "anonymous" nor a "bastard," led them unfortunately into excesses and inconsistencies in their description of the genealogical tree which have ever since disturbed and confounded the leaders of orthodoxy. The cause of these apparently reckless and confusing genealogical descriptions becomes apparent when the defenders and protag-

onists of the abruptly announced Christ or Messiah were put to the severe task of proving that He was an actual, historical person and not merely a legendary or mythical hero. And just as the introductory portions of the first and third Gospels (in our current version) were doubtless written to offset antagonistic propaganda of their time, so, as we shall see, each of the Gospels was written to overcome recurrent waves of skepticism and to give the biography of Jesus a fitting setting relative to the critical demands of passing epochs.

Therefore, Matthew, to neutralize the demeaning insinuations against his hero, conjures for Him an imposing historical perspective by chronologically classifying His ancestry into three periods of fourteen generations each: namely, from Abraham to David; from David to the Babylonian Captivity; from the Captivity to the Great Advent. Naturally, the artificiality of such a genealogical table lays the account open to serious suspicion; but Matthew's purpose evidently was to hoist his hero above all the prophets and teachers of his race that He might become the supernatural cynosure of the ages.

While Mark had presented Jesus as a humble human being, illumined with a comparatively slight supernatural halo, Matthew, not content even with his own genealogical introduction, which was well calculated to convince the Jews, to whom especially his plea was proffered, that Jesus was the true Messiah, proceeds, in addition, to proclaim Him as one who had descended directly from heaven, fathered by the Holy Ghost who had "overshadowed" His human mother for the sake of His own generation, and to assure us that even the name by which He shall be known on earth had been chosen for Him by His heavenly sponsors.

As if intending to overwhelm a doubting and insinuating age, and defiantly answering those who had intimated illegitimacy and anonymity, he causes his hero to be begotten in a manner repulsively violative of natural law, yet sufficiently mystical to fascinate the susceptible.

Bearing in mind, as we shall see, that the Jesus, whose story constitutes the burden of the Gospels, was probably derived from a mystical ideal personage proclaimed by Paul long before the Gospels were indited, we can easily account for the gradual development of Christ's career in each succeeding narrative. These writers undertook to transform Paul's phenomenon into an actual historical character, with a sufficient background to lift Him effectively beyond the horizon of mere legendary lore. Remembering this we are not surprised to find Matthew, after introducing the subject of his biography with an overawing preamble or prologue, proceeding to embellish it with miraculous features which had not been woven into the first publication of the story by Mark.

To illustrate: Mark briefly states that immediately after Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan He was straightway driven by the Spirit into the wilderness where He stayed forty days fighting the devil, and with the wild beasts. Upon this slender intimation of Mark, Matthew builds an imposing drama featuring the conflict of Jesus with the devil in minutest detail and meticulously specifying each temptation the wily seducer proffered. Matthew had searched the Hebrew scriptures more carefully than Mark, his design being apparently to seek material there out of which he could construct a more human and concrete character than Mark had succeeded in doing. Discovering the passage in the Psalms,

> "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee,
> and in their hands they shall bear thee up,
> Lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone,"

he expands the prior Gospel's bare intimation into a conflict of wit between his hero and the devil, which not only adds interest to the story but enhances the supernatural qualities of the Savior. The comparison reveals to us how these compositions were possibly composed, each building on the other with seemingly fictional material. One wonders why, if the

original alleged "common source," from which modern critics surmise that the Gospels were derived, contained the detailed dramatic situations which Matthew featured in the scene of the temptation, Mark did not also present them but gave, instead, merely the slight suggestion of it. At once we detect that Matthew entertained a different view point from which to construct his biography. Mark, apparently, wrote for those who were already acquainted with the general characteristics of the legendary Christ (which, as I am contending throughout this essay and shall later demonstrate, emanated from the mystical lore of the East through the agency of Paul) and required nothing more than a broad outline of His career to increase their interest and devotion.

But Matthew wrote with the manifest purpose of contradicting and converting the contentious and antagonistic Jews who were loath to hear anything about a pretentious Messiah.

He is ever palpably conscious of their stiff-necked opposition and incredulity. Therefore, he sedulously seeks scriptural passages as apparent prophecies of the advent and career of Jesus, and out of this material constructs his interesting drama. Often, however, in his eagerness to compel the conviction of his coreligionists (provided we grant that the writer of Matthew was a Jew) he unwittingly drags in Old Testament quotations by the ears, which have caused commentators no little embarrassment.

As we have already observed up to the time when Mark wrote his Gospel the term "Son of God" [1] had not apparently been applied to the prophet of Nazareth.

It was probably interpolated some time after the succeeding Gospels had appeared; for when Matthew's Gospel was published the application of this title to the acclaimed Messiah had already instigated the sneering and scoffing of the out-

[1] Though this title does appear in the first paragraph of this Gospel, we have already called attention to the fact that it is probably an interpolation as implied in the marginal note of the Revised Version of 1881, in which it is admitted several ancient authorities omit the appellation.

raged Jews. So, to counteract the ridicule, Matthew conceives the drama of the Temptation, wherein the devil impersonates the Jews, and cries: "If thou art the Son of God cast thyself down from" the pinnacle of the temple. By putting these words in the mouth of the devil and opposing their manifest sarcasm with the witticism and keen retort of the Savior, Matthew palpably intimates that Jesus detects the snares set for Him by the jeering Jews.

The writer of Matthew's Gospel is keen to sustain the authority of his hero through the sanction of scriptural passages. This is especially evidenced in the manner that this writer met the ugly rumor emanating from Jewish sources relative to the birth of Jesus. Mark avoids any reference to it, which can be accounted for only on the theory that the rumor had not been bruited in his time. For when the story began to spread that Jesus had been born of a virgin, and was, therefore, the Son of God, the disbelieving Jews loudly scoffed and refused to be convinced. They counteracted the claim of the miraculous and divine origin of the Savior with the bold declaration that he was merely an illegitimate child and that his earthly father was well-known to them.[2]

In order to overcome this prejudicial interpretation of the natural origin of Jesus, Matthew seeks the Scriptures to find, perchance, a passage which shall warrant the announcement that though Jesus was born out of wedlock, his true father was not a man but the Spirit of God, or the Holy Ghost. He was fortunate in having found a seemingly corroborative passage in Isaiah vii: 14, which ever since has been cited throughout Christendom as a prophecy that the Messiah was to be born of

[2] That this was the general attitude of the Jews who had not accepted Jesus as the Messiah, we may see in the apochryphal gospel of Nicodemus where we are told when he was brought before Pilate He was accused of being illegitimately begotten in spite of the legend that He was begotten by the Holy Ghost. "Annas and Caiaphas spake to Pilate, All this multitude of people is to be regarded, who cry out, that he was born through fornication, . . . ; but they who deny him to be born through fornication are his proselytes and disciples" (Nic. ii: 10).

a virgin. It was Matthew apparently who first made this scriptural discovery.[8] However, to appreciate the absurdity of

[8] Yet Matthew was unfortunate in that he seemingly was unfamiliar with the Hebrew language and quoted from the Septuagint translation. Had he known that the Greek translation of Isa. vii: 14 was incorrect he might not have laid the foundation of a struggle in dogmatic warfare that has for ages permeated Christendom. Already the Jewish contemporaries called the attention of early Christians to the false translation of the Hebrew word rendered "virgin," and insisted that correctly translated it should read "a young woman." * In the middle of the second century Marcion had made the same assertion which appears in Tertullian's work against Marcion. A little later in Justin Martyr's debate with Trypho, the latter called attention to the error of the translators and still later St. Jerome made the honest confession that the heretics and Jews were right in their statements.

In our own time, after centuries of disputation, honest scholars are compelled to admit the truth. In Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* we find the following: "Neither the article nor the noun in *ha almath* requires the meaning put upon it. . . . It is now universally agreed that *almath* does not necessarily denote virginity and is certainly not the word which would have been chosen if the supernatural character of birth without a human father had been the point to be emphasized."

Even the *Catholic Encyclopedia* with implied reluctance admits the point in issue: "Those who derive the Virgin birth from Isa. vii: 14 must maintain that an accidental misinterpretation of the prophet by the evangelist replaced historic truth among the early Christians in spite of a better knowledge and the testimony of the disciples and kindred of Jesus" (p. 451). Yet in spite of this insinuation: namely, that the disciples and kindred of Jesus knew that the latter's origin was parthenogenetic, the same writer is compelled to confess that "Modern theology does not admit that Isa. vii: 14 contains a real prophecy fulfilled in the Virgin birth of Christ; it must maintain, therefore, that St. Matthew misinterpreted the passage when he wrote: "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which the Lord spake by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son." There is no indication that the Jewish contemporaries of Matthew understood the prophet's words in this sense. Dalman (Die Worte Jesu I Leipsic, 1891) maintains that the Jewish people never expected a fatherless Messias and that there exists no vestige of such a Jewish interpretation" (*C.E.*, Vol. 15, p. 451).

St. Jerome was one of the very few of his age who was familiar with the Hebrew language and translated the Vulgate Version directly from that language. His reply to his critics for retaining the Septuagint word "virgin" instead of "young woman," as in Hebrew, was naïve enough. "I know," he says, "that the Jews are accustomed to meet us with the objection that in Hebrew the word *almath* does not mean a virgin but a young woman. And, to speak truth, a virgin is properly called *bethulah*." †

* See S. Reinarch's *Orpheus*, p. 197.

† Jerome on *Perpetual Virginity of the Blessed Mary*, Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Vol. VI, p. 336.

the forced misconstruction of the verse he quotes, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son," we need but read and analyze the entire chapter.

There we read that the kings of Syria and Israel had come up to Jerusalem in the reign of Ahaz to conquer it. Ephraim also joins the conspiracy ("And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim.") Isaiah, as the spokesman of Jehovah, tries to hearten and console Ahaz, the king of Judah. "Fear not, neither let thy heart be faint because of these two smoking firebrands. . . . Thus saith the Lord, It shall not stand." Notwithstanding this assurance Ahaz is still afraid and doubtful. To encourage his faith Isaiah insists that Ahaz ask God for a sign to seal the prophecy that Israel, Syria and Ephraim shall fail in their attack upon him. But Ahaz has not the heart to ask for such assurance. Then Jehovah, through the prophet, impatiently cries out to him: "Is it a small thing for you to weary men, that ye will weary my God also? Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son."

Now this so-called prophecy has been made by Matthew to refer to Jesus, who thereupon launches the legend that He was born of a virgin according to scriptural prescription. Jesus, however, was not born for several hundred years after the utterance of the prophecy; whereas unfortunately the prophet himself sets the exact time when his prophecy shall be fulfilled. Instead of waiting several hundred years for the virgin-born son to appear, Isaiah, after assuring Ahaz that the conspiracy "shall not stand" exclaims, "within three score and five years shall Ephraim be broken in pieces, so that it shall not be a people." The utter downfall of Ephraim was to be accom-

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Thus we see the most accomplished linguist among the fathers of the church admitted centuries ago that the famous doctrine of the Virgin birth was founded on a false translation; yet, in spite of this acknowledgment the church has maintained the miraculous birth of Jesus as ordained of God and an indisputable truth. Incidentally this exposure reveals the reckless manner in which Matthew used the ancient Scripture to support and justify his narrative.

plished within sixty-five years. But as Ahaz reigned only sixteen years, when he died he was not to witness Ephraim's downfall. The fall of the two other kings, however (the kings of Syria and Israel), was to occur within his reign. "For, before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose *two* kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken." This, indeed, came to pass through the agency of the king of Assyria.[4]

Summarizing, then, the purport of the prophecy we have this: a virgin-born son was to be the divine sign of the prophetic assurance that within his own reign Ahaz shall witness the defeat of "the two smoking firebrands" (Syria and Israel), and, furthermore, that, within sixty-five years from the date of the prophecy, the third member of the conspiracy, Ephraim, shall be utterly destroyed.

How, then, we may humbly ask, can a so-called prophecy which limits the date of a certain event to take place within the sixteen years of the reign of Ahaz and foretells the occurrence of another that shall transpire not later than sixty-five years after the date of its utterance, by any possibility have reference to the birth of a child several hundred years after the utterance of the alleged prophecy? Yet, Matthew and all the authorities of Christendom ever since, uncritically following him, have declared that this prophecy can refer to none other than Jesus who was born at a period hundreds of years beyond the specific date positively fixed by the alleged prophecy itself.

From this analysis we may conclude that as the prophecy can in no sense be logically ascribed to the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, Matthew merely utilized it as a convenient utterance on which authoritatively to base a refutation of the common insinuation that Jesus was an illegitimate child. There was no other way of overcoming the hateful charge of the

[4] II Kings xvi.

Jews who opposed Him: namely, that He was a victim of bastardy. The force of Matthew's ingenuity is lost on us today, for we are too far removed from the occasion; but to the Jews of that time who despised Jesus the desperate effort of Matthew to prove by Scripture that he was not "born of fornication" as they charged, but "of the Holy Ghost" must have been quite effective, especially among the unlearned Hebrews. But to us who may now calmly investigate Matthew's unfortunate anachronism nothing can be more apparent than that in conceiving the origin of his hero, he relegated it to an occult source that He might be made to appear superhuman and an agent descending direct from God, the Father, to accomplish the redemption of humanity.

II

There is another unhappy use of Old Testament Scripture by Matthew which he employs to convince the ancient Jews that even the very name of the Savior was already prescribed in heaven before His earthly advent.

He informs us that an angel approached Joseph, the proxy-father of Jesus, and announced to him in a dream, "Fear not to take unto thee thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. She shall bring forth a son and thou shalt call his name JESUS."

Why should the name of the gospel hero be specified as JESUS, when Matthew had cited a so-called prophecy of the Messiah's advent, which announced that he was to be called "IMMANUEL"? It seems rather odd that when Matthew cited the verse from Isaiah, in which the alleged prophecied virgin-born child was referred to, he did not cling literally to the text but varied it for some reason of his own. Isaiah had said thou shalt call his name Immanuel; yet while Matthew utilizes that text literally as a sincere prophecy of his

hero's advent, he does not hesitate to break the force of the prophetic utterance by altering the proposed name from that of Immanuel to Jesus. Now why?

Within the compass of my own reading thus far I have never met with any scholar who has discussed this problem. Of course, the difference in names has been observed but it has usually been glossed by some fatuous argument. Immanuel means God with us; Jesus was the name of the Son of God, therefore, the names are practically the same or represent at least the same import! The name Immanuel was rare among the Jews. It occurs only three times in the Bible.[5] In the Talmud and Midrash the name does not appear. In the Haggadah the name Immanuel is not mentioned, which seems to indicate that the application of this word to the Messiah was not known in Jewish circles.[6] Did the writer of Matthew, then, hesitate to use this name as that by which the Messiah was to be called because it was so little known and had not been accepted among the Jews as a name by which the Messiah was to be recognized? Or was it (which is now probable) because the Gospel Hero, whose biography he is building up out of the material afforded by ancient Scripture, was already known by the name of Jesus and therefore to have called Him Immanuel would have been inconsistent and confusing?

If we recall, as I shall later show, that Paul had already been preaching the leadership of a phenomenal hero, whom he called Jesus, long before the Gospel of Matthew was written and before he himself had heard of the Galilean, and that when He met with His followers he refused to accept their gospel and imposed His own upon them, we may discern the possible reason why Matthew altered the prophecied name of Immanuel to that of Jesus. We shall learn later that the Palestinian Evangelists recognized a certain leader whom they called the Nazarene as the Messiah, about whom Paul was entirely ig-

[5] Isa. vii: 14; viii: 8 and 10.
[6] *Jewish Encyclopedia.*

norant before he encountered them, that he angrily rejected the gospel which the Nazarene's followers proclaimed and insisted that they accept His personal gospel or be subject to anathema; a gospel which he had long been preaching in the name of Jesus, whom he called the Christ; that when the two schools were finally merged under Paul's leadership, the original Nazarenes succumbed to the Paulinic Messianic message and accepted as the name of their leader the name which Paul had imposed upon them.

Therefore, when Matthew sought to incorporate the phenomenal, legendary hero of Paul's gospel in a biography of the Savior and present Him as a human being, whereas Paul's hero was a purely spiritual abstraction, he sought texts in the ancient Scripture for the delineation he required. Having found the passage in Isaiah which we are discussing he appropriates it to authorize the proclamation that the Redeemer was born of a virgin and fathered by the Holy Ghost; but as the Redeemer was by that time known among the Evangelists by the name of Jesus, because of Paul's conquering leadership, he could not alter it according to the prophecy and call him Immanuel. Hence, though Matthew cites the Isaian prophecy, he makes the angel announce the coming advent of the Savior, heedless of the inconsistency, by a name which he says was already registered in heaven.

Thus again we may observe how the biographical sketch of Matthew's hero is a probable fabrication woven out of the material provided in the Old Testament; a composition which, perhaps, fell from the pen of some shrewd theologian in the latter half of the first century or the middle of the second.

III

Of course, it was to be expected that Matthew's forced and illogical application of Old Testament texts to the career of Jesus would be reluctantly recognized by orthodox Christian

theologians; and it is not a little amusing to observe how naïvely some of them undertake to gloss the inconsistency and free themselves from embarrassment.

Thus, for instance, E. De Pressense, the distinguished French Protestant historian of Early Christianity in his book *The Apostolic Age* (p. 45) remarks: "Matthew uses great freedom in quoting the Old Testament. Absorbed with the idea that the thought of the Messiah runs through the sacred oracles, he often turns into positive prophecy declarations which have *only an indirect reference to gospel facts.*" The italics are mine, but the unconsciously naïve admission of this eloquent author plainly intimates that Matthew twists texts into an application to the alleged events of his hero which could have no reference to Him at all, because they referred to historical situations that transpired centuries before Christ's advent. "Matthew, absorbed with the idea that the thought of the Messiah runs through the sacred oracles," correctly translated, can mean nothing else than that Matthew, determined to sustain his fabrication by "the sacred oracles," falsely uses them and converts them into interpretations which they were never meant to convey.

IV

With this key in our mind let us proceed with an investigation of Matthew's method of rearing the structure of his hero's career and teachings from the material found in Old Testament citations. That this hero may be more than a legendary character or phenomenal figure and supported by an historical background, of course a place must be discovered or invented to indicate where He was born. Matthew seems to have been the first biographer to discover the text, "and thou, Bethlehem, out of thee shall come a governor." The text cannot be made to read a "savior"; nevertheless, with Matthew's

customary heedlessness, he risks the discovery of the solecism. A Savior after all would be a sort of governor of human fate.

However, the prophecy of a Messiah,[7] in which is found the reference to Bethlehem appropriated by Matthew, could by no possibility apply to the mission of a Man of Peace, who was to come to conquer the world with kindness and love. For the "peace" which the ruler of Israel is to achieve over the Assyrians, according to the chapter in Micah containing the alleged prediction of the birthplace of the Messiah, is to be brought about through the fury of the Lord and the travail of slaughter. This message reads: "I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard." This man of "peace" is "to waste the land of Assyria with the sword . . . thus shall he deliver us from the Assyrian!" To assert that this was a prophecy of the career and teachings of Jesus is like saying that what Napoleon accomplished by the sword was the achievement of the world peace conceived and visioned by Emanuel Kant. Yet if one part of the alleged prophetic fore-glimpse of the Savior may be appropriately applied to Jesus of Nazareth then why not the rest?

Once more, Matthew in his search of Scripture stumbles on a suggestive text: "A voice was heard in Ramah . . . Rachel weeping for her children." This so-called appropriate prophecy, relative to an alleged event in the career of Jesus refers so plainly to the time when the Lord shall bring together the broken tribes of Israel and Judah to live together in peace that one wonders how it could possibly be misconstrued. "Thus saith Jehovah: A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children. . . . Thus saith Jehovah, Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears, . . . thy children shall come again to their own border. . . . Behold the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man,

[7] Micah. v: 2.

. . . I will put my law in their inward parts and in their heart I will write it: and I will be their God and they shall be my people.[8]

Now, Matthew builds, out of this clear reference to the time when Jehovah promised to reunite Israel and Judah, to assuage the weeping and groaning of Rachel, a repulsive story (for which there is not the slightest historical corroboration) of Herod slaying all the male infants in Bethlehem in order not to fail to include the mysterious new-born infant of a virgin mother. This is so palpably a story made out of whole cloth and so utterly unrelated to what Jeremiah manifestly had in mind when he referred to Rachel's weeping, that one wonders Matthew's distortion of the text could be brazenly defended through all succeeding ages.

Once more; Mark had introduced the Savior as seeking baptism at the hands of John. The latter was at the time a well-known historical character (and we shall later show was the first to be honored as the prophet-savior before the hero of our present Gospels was acclaimed as such). The Savior of the Gospels was as yet, as we have already intimated, but a vague conception or an abstract ideal imported from the East by Paul, whom Matthew struggles to clothe with human habiliments. Matthew therefore seeks a text to justify the relation between John and Jesus, that the latter's historical certainty may be established. He discovers a text that foretells the "fact" of John's being the forerunner of the virgin-born Redeemer, who has, indeed, under divine guidance prepared the way for Him. "The voice of one crying in the wilderness Make straight the way of the Lord." Even a casual study of this text in Isaiah discloses the intention of the prophet. He is manifestly making no prophecy to be fulfilled in far future years about some forerunner crying in the wilderness to prepare the way for some mysterious Savior. Isaiah is speaking of himself as the voice that is crying. "The voice of one that crieth Prepare

[8] Jer. xxxi: passim.

ye in the wilderness,'' etc., is his way of announcing himself as the herald. This is clearly shown a few verses after where he continues his proclamation; ''O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; say unto the cities of Judah, behold your God.'' [9] But to Matthew it seems sufficient that such a text exists and with sublime nonchalance, assured that ''through the sacred oracles there runs the idea of the Savior,'' he utilizes it to accommodate the requisites of the historically unsupported character which he is launching on the attention of the world.

The more carefully one examines the ancient texts that Matthew and the other Gospel writers seize upon willfully to portray a spiritually colossal figure for which, apparently at the time, there was no historical corroboration, the more one is amazed at their temerariousness.

Let us proceed: Matthew invents an odyssey for Jesus manifestly conceived because of a hint given in an ancient text. Describing in detail various peregrinations of this hero, in order to present a sufficient historical background, he is made to travel far and wide around Palestine, going even beyond the banks of Jordan—even to the far borders of Zebulun and Naphtali. Now one would naturally take for granted that such travels would have been customary with the teachers of Israel, especially with prophets who penetrated the land, and that it would have been quite unnecessary for such a minor event to have been foretold centuries in advance. But with Matthew it is sufficient that there is such a text in the sacred oracles and he forthwith uses it. ''The people that sat in darkness beyond the Jordan saw a great light.''

Now, oddly enough, there does not seem to be such a text as Matthew appears to quote anywhere in Isaiah. Let us compare his statement with what we really find in the ancient text. Matthew says, ''And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders

[9] Isa. xl: 3–9.

of Zebulun and Nephthalim: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw a great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up."

Now, let us read the actual text as we find it in Isaiah, which we shall discover has been badly garbled by Matthew. After having told that the people shall be broken in pieces by the Assyrians because they have forgotten their God,[10] he continues: "Nevertheless, the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterwards did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light," etc. Here are references to two historical events: First, to the time when, during the reign of Pekah, king of Israel, came Tiglathpileser and carried away Galilee and all the land of Naphtali into Assyria.[11] The second event referred to ("when the Lord did more grievously afflict her") occurred during the reign of Ahaz. Having thus referred to more ancient events he then, to console his people, refers to a more immediate time when "the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. . . . For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian."

Manifestly these utterances sustain no relation to what is to occur at some future age but to events close by. Those people, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations, had been afflicted in the land of Naphtali and Zebulun and had come to "see a great light" and the yoke that burdened them had been broken.[12] That Matthew should have appropriated these

[10] Isa. ix: 1, 2.
[11] II Kings xv: 29.
[12] Isa. ix: 1–4.

references by the ancient prophet as foreknowledge of what Jesus would do in "the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali" certainly appears like a gross miscarriage. He, apparently, finds these ancient texts a sufficient warrant for a detail in the portraiture of his hero which may afford it a more convincing, historical setting.

That we may further appreciate Matthew's illogical, not to say untruthful, adaptation of ancient texts as prophetic utterances foreglimpsing the career of the Redeemer, let us study his reference to the forty-second chapter of Isaiah. He quotes a certain portion of this chapter as follows: "Behold my servant in whom I am well pleased; He shall not strive nor cry aloud—a bruised reed shall he not break, nor quench the smoking flax."[13] This was a convenient "prophecy" for the introduction of the Man of Peace. But the miscarriage in applying this alleged prophecy to Jesus becomes at once apparent when we read the entire chapter in Isaiah. While it is true the above irenic passages are there found it is also true that there are other passages in the same chapter, presumably prophetic of the mission of the Redeemer which indicate that this messenger of God will execute fiercer deeds than quenching the smoking flax and breaking the bruised reed. "Sing unto the Lord a new song. . . . The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war; he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies. I have long time holden my peace; now I will cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once." That is to be the method of the servant of Jehovah by which he "will bring the blind by a way they knew not; lead them in paths they have not known; make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight.[14]

Matthew did not quote this continuation of the "prophecy," because he wished to portray his hero or Redeemer as a man

[13] Isa. xlii: 1–4.
[14] Isa. xlii: 10, 13, 14, 16.

of peace who will "bring forth judgment to the Gentiles, but shall not cry nor cause his voice to be heard in the street." If one section of this alleged prophecy refers to the Redeemer then the other sections must also hold Him in contemplation. His peace is to be brought about, His judgments made to prevail, in spite of the fact that He shall not break the bruised reed, not by silence but by "roaring"; he shall "open the eyes of the blind and bring prisoners from the prison" and compel the inhabitants of "the end of the earth and the isles and they that go down to sea" to praise him by "wasting the mountains and hills and drying up the herbs and turning rivers into islands and drying up the pools." In other words he shall be the servant of a God of vengeance and bring peace about through war and bloodshed. This ill becomes the nature of Him who laid down His life for His friends and though lifted up drew all men unto Him.

It becomes more and more evident that Matthew employs himself in seeking disconnected texts and unwarrantably twisting them from the context of the writers whom he quotes that he may use them as effective material in constructing an actual human character who is to personify a mystical ideal for which Paul asserted he knew that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together till now." [15]

V

The unique method Jesus employed, teaching His principles by way of allegorical parables [16] was caused, according to Matthew, by an injunction imposed upon Him in a prophetic utterance. Why it should be a prerogative of prophecy, to

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[15] Rom. viii: 22.

[16] How absurd it would be to assume a divine prediction necessary to authorize the teaching by parables it is only necessary to recall that such a rhetorical method was long in vogue among the rabbis (*Jewish Encyclopedia*, art. "Parables." Also see J. McCabe's *Story of Religious Controversy*).

foretell the rhetorical style of a coming Redeemer, is somewhat difficult to understand. Yet Matthew deems it necessary to discover an apologetical text, as a warranty for the method Jesus employed. "By hearing ye shall hear and in no wise comprehend." This harsh command of Jehovah to Isaiah is repulsive enough and yet Matthew makes Jesus approve it, in order that he may adopt a supposed prophetic saying to describe his hero's characteristics. "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn again and be healed." This command seems so bitter to Isaiah that he begs the Lord to tell him how long he must impose such a curse on his people. Jehovah replies "Until cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without man, and the land become utterly waste."

Pursuant to this injunction Isaiah obediently cries to the rebellious people: "Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not." Now one would suppose that it would be grossly offensive to compare the method employed by the Redeemer who came to "have compassion on the multitude" with that of a bloodthirsty and vengeful Divinity who insisted on further hardening the hearts and dulling the comprehension of a people already steeped in sinfulness and obduracy.

But Matthew disregards the inconsistency and rather than lose the convenience of an appropriate text that would substantiate the authority of the hero whose character he is moulding out of ancient Scripture, he proceeds to employ it.

Likewise Matthew recalls a passage in the seventy-eighth Psalm which appeals to him as a further warranty for the dark sayings in the parables of Jesus. "I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us," sang the ancient singer of Israel. Because the passage contains the words "parable" and "dark sayings" Matthew seems to

think they authorize the confusing utterances which he puts in the mouth of Jesus and which His disciples cannot understand till He reads the riddle for them. But when we refer to the Psalm we find it held no such a connotation. For the parable and the dark sayings to which the singer is referring are merely the well-known sagas of ancient Israel, the epic of their wanderings, "battles, sieges, fortunes." Moreover they were easily understood by the older generation of Jews who were acquainted with their past history, and were "dark sayings" and "parables" to the younger generation only to whom they were addressed.

Matthew insists upon utilizing texts that have no direct bearing upon the life of his hero save to the extent that he attempts to build up His career out of the material they contain. If it were the purpose of Jesus to harden the hearts and dull the ears of those whom He called to repentance and wished to save, why did He descend from the glory of heaven to endure the agony of the cross? But Matthew apparently has little respect for logic or consistency; his chief labor is to discover ancient sayings and use them as threads to be woven into the fabric of his story.

VI

In almost every act which Matthew ascribes to Jesus we may discover its origin in some happy text which clearly had suggested it. Thus does he wish to show that Jesus condemns hypocrites for their audacious defiance of moral rectitude (which one might naturally assume He would condemn on his own authority). Matthew must needs sustain Him with an ancient prophet's words: "This people honoreth me with their lips: but in vain do they worship me." We may easily detect Matthew's method of carving out the character and career of his hero from quotable passages in the ancient Scripture.

There comes a time, for instance, when the biographer determines to lift his subject to exalted heights, far beyond the pinnacle on which he had thus far placed Him. How shall this be done? The narrative at first leads us to regard Jesus merely as a direct descendant of David and Abraham. He is the Son of Man and mingles with publicans and sinners. But a convenient text in the Psalms points the way to hoisting his hero to loftier heights. He makes Jesus bravely challenge destiny by insisting that His nervous and anxious disciples tell Him whom they think He is. Of course, if He thought they regarded Him as nothing more than He appeared to them outwardly to have been He would not have asked the critical question. He wishes to impress upon them that He is more than merely the Son of David as they had been regarding Him. And Matthew has Him employ the text in the 110th Psalm as a gentle hint to His disciples that He must be God himself; for the Psalmist had reported that "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand." And Matthew clinches the argument by making Jesus interpret the "dark saying," thus: "If David calleth him Lord, how can he be his son?" This was the first hint in the biography that the Redeemer might be more than a human being and it is made so to react upon the disciples and overawe them that they "durst not from that day forth ask Him any more questions." It seems obvious that it was the text in the Psalm that suggested to Matthew the scene he describes, rather than that it was the actual scene which suggested the text. Matthew makes ancient Scriptures support his biographical sketch.

VII

Consider one more incident in the life of Jesus. In the legend which had gathered round this name, since it was first launched on the attention of the world through the preaching of Paul, a rumor had spread that when He entered Jerusalem

in triumph He rode humbly on an ass. Of course, this rumor must have spread from tongue to tongue before it was finally recorded in the Gospel story. For these annals are doubtless but an aggregation of rumors and legends concerning the career of a certain mystical personage which had been in vogue. The Gospel writers can hardly be thought to have constructed the drama out of their own consciousness.

There was surely something to build on. I am surmising, as I have repeatedly asserted and I shall in future pages attempt to demonstrate, that it was Paul who vouched for the first intimation of the existence of such a supernatural character on which the dramatic Gospels were finally constructed.

Now, as we learn in the study of comparative religion, almost every event in the Gospel stories of Jesus can be duplicated in the lives of Buddha, Krishna, and other heroes of ethnic religions. The skill of the Gospel compositions is revealed in the effective method they employ in blending those ancient pagan legends with the Hebraic writings of antiquity. The fact that they (Matthew especially) always re-enforced each saying and act of Jesus with a text of the Old Testament, proves, as I have already stated, either that the text itself suggested the incident or that previous rumor had already spread its narration so widely that justification or corroboration of it through the sanction of scriptural texts seemed necessary in order to merge it in Hebrew lore.

Now, let us not forget that Paul in his epistles, which were issued long before the publication of the Gospels, had informed the world that the long expected Prince of Peace, for whom the Jews had been so impatiently waiting, had appeared in the person of the Christ Jesus whom he was proclaiming. "For he is our peace, . . . and came and preached peace to you who were afar off, and to them that were nigh.[17]

This was the Prince of Peace, the legends concerning whom had spread throughout Jewry both in Palestine and among

[17] Eph. ii: 14, 17.

"those of the Dispersion." He was to be essentially a man of peace though powerful, upon whose shoulders would rest the governments of the world. Now, in the light of these rumors emanating as I surmise from Paul's preaching, the Gospel writers, especially Matthew, search the Scriptures to find corroborating texts. In their search they fall upon the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. "He is despised and rejected of men: a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." Out of the incidents mentioned in this allegorical poem the whole story of Jesus, as construed in the Gospels, could be easily evolved. And, insomuch as He was to be portrayed as a man of peace, despised and rejected of men, what better symbolism of such a fate could be conceived than that this great leader approaching the hour of His anticipated triumph should come, not in the regalia of royalty accompanied by a retinue of caparisoned steeds, but as one clothed in humility and astride a ridiculous animal?

To appreciate the force of this portrayal we must recall that it was the habit of the prophets of the Old Testament to present their preachments in dramatic form. They acted out before the people a realistic depiction of the message they wished to convey. For instance, Jeremiah, to illustrate how rotten Israel had become because of its disobedience of the divine will, puts a girdle around his loins, at the command of God, then removes it and "hides it in the Euphrates"; then anon he returns to the spot, digs up the girdle and finds that it has been "marred"; going through this odd performance merely to illustrate dramatically the proclamation of the Deity: "After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah." So, likewise, Hosea, in order to denounce effectively, at the command of Jehovah, the wantonness of Israel, takes to himself a common prostitute and generates children through her. This he does merely to show how Israel prostituted itself in idolatrous and religious licentiousness. Isaiah, also, in order to seal his prophecy, "Behold a virgin (a young woman) shall conceive

and bear a son," goes "unto the prophetess and she conceived and bore a son."

In short the mind of the ancient Hebrew inclined instinctively to the realistic dramatization of "dark sayings" and ethical ideals. Now, true to this habit, the Gospel writers, discovering the passage in Isaiah depicting "a man despised and rejected of men," proceed to dramatize the alleged prophecy by representing the Messianic Hero entering Jerusalem astride a humble ass amid the hosannas of frantic followers.

And Matthew, with his customary keenness in discovering convenient texts to support each event in the career of his hero, does not fail in this incident. In Zechariah he reads:

> "Tell ye the daughter of Zion
> Behold thy king cometh unto thee
> Meek, and riding on an ass,
> And upon a colt, the foal of an ass." [18]

The text cited could by no possibility have any reference to Jesus, for the prophet is referring to the time when Jehovah shall cut off Tyre and Sidon, Hamath and Gaza, Damascus and Ekron and all the Philistines: and when no oppressor shall pass through the camp of Israel any more. But Jesus arrived at a time most inopportune for the fulfillment of that prophecy as the temple in Jerusalem was about to be destroyed and the Israelites to be scattered throughout the globe. When Zechariah exclaimed, "O daughter of Zion rejoice, behold thy king cometh unto thee riding upon an ass," he was referring to that portion of Zion that would remain after all her enemies had been conquered and destroyed.

But that time never arrived in the history of Zion.

VIII

There is, however, something so extraordinary, not to say absurd, in having a king riding to triumph on the back of an

[18] Zech. ix: 9.

ass, whether that king be in ancient Jewry or the king of the New Jerusalem, that the incident calls for meticulous examination. Let us first study the variations of the incident as given in the three Synoptics. Granting the rumor that He had been seen riding on an ass, it would have occurred to His votaries that the ass must have been especially selected by Him and could therefore not have been one that had been desecrated by previous use. Thus, by the time Mark issues his statement, the legend has developed to the stage of explaining how Jesus had made His choice. According to Mark He sends his disciples into a neighboring village where "they shall find a colt tied, *whereon no man ever yet sat.*" But when Matthew, with an eye on Jewish converts, undertakes to present the scene, true to his habit he seeks a corroborative text in the ancient Scripture and falls upon the accommodating passage in Zechariah,[19] adopting it as prophetic of the incident we are considering.

However, Matthew discovers some embarrassment in making Zechariah agree with Mark's simple declaration that the Savior rode on a single unused animal. For Zechariah asserts that "the King cometh . . . riding on an ass, and the foal of an ass." That is, he mentions two animals instead of one. So Matthew despite its inconsistency with Mark, literally copies the Zechariah text and applies it to the rumored entry of Jesus.

Apparently he does not realize the ridiculous and undignified figure the Savior would present, struggling to maintain His position astride the backs of two animals, one of which must have been higher than the other, for one was full grown and the other was a small and awkward colt. Matthew, however, does not represent Jesus riding astride two animals, yet he cites the inconsistent alleged prophecy.

Now it is to be observed that by the time John's Gospel appears, which is many decades later, the apparent absurdity

[19] Zech ix: 9.

of assuming that Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of an inappropriate text had been detected. So John glosses the alleged prophetic text by misquoting it, thus restoring the hero to a more dignified position. His language is: "Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt."[20] This is not, however, what Zechariah had said, as we have already shown.

IX

The incident of the ass, however, involves an occult intimation which I think has been overlooked by most critics and which is well worthy of serious investigation. It may, indeed, suggest the root or origin of the dramatic tale. The ass had not here figured for the first time in Biblical lore. There was an old charge made by the pagans who despised the Jews that they actually worshipped an ass-god. Indeed Diodorus has boldly recorded the alleged fact that when Antiochus Epiphanes raided the temple at Jerusalem he found therein a statue of an ass with an old bearded man astride, which was reputed to be the figure of Moses. This allegation spread far and wide and Tacitus even presumes to discover the origin of the Jewish ass-worship in the legend that it was that animal which led the Jews in the wilderness when fleeing from Pharaoh to streams of water where they could slake their thirst. This is probably true; see Gen. xxxvi: 24.

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[20] Parenthetically, we may say, that of course we are familiar with the effort of translators to minimize the inconsistency above indicated. The Greek word "kai" is universally translated "and" and has that meaning in the Greek language. But some translators, in this instance, insist upon having the word mean "even" instead of "and." So they translate the passage in Matthew, "cometh riding on an ass, even the foal of an ass." This would of course make sense and avoid the ridiculous situation above indicated. But is not this a forced effort to escape a serious embarrassment? The ablest Greek scholars refuse to accept the gloss. Bloomfield (Greek Testament with English Notes) makes this positive statement "Some eminent commentators would render the *kai* even. But this is doing violence to the plain sense expressed and would really *destroy* the coincidence as to the fulfillment of the prophecy."

Thus it is evident that in some way the ass seems to have been woven into Jewish lore and to have been esteemed beyond other animals. We find, for instance [21] when Jehovah commands that "every firstling that cometh from a beast shall be sacrificed to commemorate the slaying of the firstborn in the land of Egypt," he excepts the firstborn of the ass. "Every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb." Strangely the firstborn of the ass seem to be honored with the firstborn of Jehovah's sons. (*See Appendix C.*) For after commanding that the firstling of the ass shall not be sacrificed but redeemed, he says, "Therefore (because of the firstborn slain in Egypt) I sacrifice all that openeth the womb—but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem." This passage seems to make an honorable exception of the ass with that of the firstborn among the sons of Jehovah.

Once more, when Jehovah decided to employ an animal as a divine agency through whose mouth He would speak He selects, not the stately horse as the consecrated animal, but despite its legendary stupidity, Balaam's humble donkey.

Thus vaguely we perceive a trace of especial regard for this animal long in vogue among the ancient tribal Hebrews. In some way this fact seems to run parallel with the universally reported legend among the profane historians that ass-worship existed among the Jews. At the time of the advent of Jesus and the inauguration of the Christian religion the rumor had been so well established that the alleged calumny was transferred to the early Christians because that religion was first propagated by the converted Jews. Tertullian (*Apologia*) found it necessary forcibly to deny the insinuation of the pagans. "Certain people out of your midst," he says, "dreamed that an ass's head was our God."

Notwithstanding this denial, there was actually one gnostic sect of the Christians, known as the Sethinai [22] who were in-

[21] Ex. xiii: 13, 15.

[22] As an incident corroborative of the persistence of ass-worship among Christians even to a comparatively recent period mark the following

deed devout votaries of the ass as their tutelary deity. To corroborate this fact there was discovered at Rome in 1856 a figure representing the image of a man with an ass's head, whose posture was such as to indicate that he was being worshipped by a man posing in front of him. But there was a singular feature connected with this image that hints at the origin of ass-worship among the early Christians (of the gnostic type) and possibly of its existence among the tribal Jews of antiquity. The letter "Y" was inscribed against the upper side of the figure above the left arm. Now, scholars have noted that that letter was the symbolical designation of the Egyptian god, Typhon-Set. (Incidentally one may observe the root of the name of that god in the name of the gnostic sect known as Sethinai.) [23]

Hence here is an intimation that the original source of the ass-cult may have been in Egypt, the land where all sorts of animals were known to have been worshipped. It seems then a possibility, to say the least, that some among the ancient tribal Jews (who as is well known were continually reverting to idolatry in spite of the punishment their God inflicted on them because of disobedience) might have taken over this phase of idolatry, which doubtless carried with it some occult

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vouched for by Charles du Cange: "In the city of Beauvais, on the fourteenth of January was celebrated the ass's festival, or holiday, being a representation of the Virgin's flight from Egypt. Upon this solemn occasion, all the clergy of the city being assembled in the cathedral, a beautiful damsel was presented to them, placed upon a donkey most sumptuously caparisoned, and thus conducted from the principal church to that of St. Stephen, into the chancel of which the maid and her bearer were escorted to the right side of the altar. During the service which followed the whole congregation at intervals imitated the brayings of the donkey, and at the conclusion of the mass the deacon, in lieu of repeating the *ita missa est*, articulated the stentorian brays, whereto his auditors gave the loudest nasal responses. The whole of this ceremony, together with a hymn in Latin sung upon the occasion, has been preserved by Charles du Cange, the French antiquary, who transcribed it from a manuscript five hundred years old" (Note to Canto II, Voltaire's *The Maid of Orleans*).

[23] For an extended account of Ass-Worship see *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. II.

or mystical formula; and that in the course of time the cult disappeared, but its devotees may have left the figure of Moses sitting on an ass, as charged by Antiochus Epiphanes when he raided the temple. However, no historical confirmation of this assertion has ever been made, I believe, and I submit the above as a mere suggestion.

Let us recall that ass-worship was also a phase of the cult of Dionysus or Bacchus. Dionysus was identified with the Semitic divinity Adonis, which easily suggests the name of the God of the Hebrews (Adonai). Lenormant in his *Dictionary of Antiquities* says: "The disposition was so marked to identify Bacchus with the various deities of the Orientals that it was even pushed to the extreme of asserting that the Jews, likewise, worshipped Dionysus."

Now, the point we have in mind is the association of the worship of the ass in the Dionysian rites. "The ass was sacred to Bacchus and an unfailing member of his train; *the god is often represented as riding upon one.*" [24]

Here then, it seems to me, is enough raw material out of which may have been constructed the legend that the Savior of Men on entering Jerusalem was seen, like Bacchus, riding on the back of a humble and "despised" ass.

As already shown some of the early Christians did actually believe they adored Jesus in the figure of the humble donkey, and the name of one of those gnostic sects, as I have before stated, has been preserved, namely, the Sethinai. Of course, such a sect could not have come into vogue unless there were some foundation for its existence. Now at the time the Gospel writers began to gather together the numerous rumors which had been disseminated far and wide concerning this mysterious "Prince of Peace" whom Paul proclaimed, doubtless they ran upon this curious legend, reciting the entry of the Savior into Jerusalem on an ass. The legend as we have seen contains a mixture of Hebrew lore and pagan custom.

[24] *Jewish Encyclopedia.*

How it might have originated we shall in a moment notice. But once the rumor spread, what finer symbol could the Gospel writers employ to illustrate the epoch of peace which the Savior was supposed to inaugurate than that of presenting Him, the meek and lowly Son of Man, "who shall not break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax," riding astride a humble and despised animal upon His triumphal entry into Jerusalem?

X

Now, how could this story have originated? Recalling the pagan gossip that the Jews actually worshipped the ass, and the cult of Bacchus in whose rites the figure of the god is always represented as riding on the back of that animal, and the insistence of some historians that some of the Jews were likewise votaries of that deity and mingled in the Dionysian ceremonies, we have, probably, the original elements that constituted the source of the legend.

In the Gospel narratives Jesus is represented as associating intimately with the base and outcast of earth, with harlots, publicans and sinners. Such an association might easily be misinterpreted by His enemies or by skeptics, as indeed it was. For the narratives state that He was accused of being in compact with, or at least a votary of, Beelzebub or Beelzebul, who was the tutelary deity of the dung-hill, or more commonly known as the fly-god. A more opprobrious accusation could scarcely be conceived. He was also accused of being a wine-bibber and a glutton. Now it is not by any means beyond possibility that some of His converts had been votaries of Bacchus (renegade Jews who had indulged in Dionysian rites, which were notoriously scandalous). Jesus being found in the company of these revelers would be taken to be one of them and naturally accused of being a wine-bibbing and gluttonous votary of the deity. Once His name is associated with that

of Bacchus, who is always represented as riding on the back of an ass, rumor would not long lag in also representing the despised Prophet of Galilee astride the ludicrous animal. First perhaps the rumor spread in derision, as when they accused Him of casting out devils by Beelzebub and reveling with wine-bibbers. But in time the derisive insinuation would be accepted by His followers as an actual fact and the lowly animal would be transformed into a symbolic agent which the Savior employed to illustrate the humility of His nature and the democratic kindliness of His mission.

Indeed, as I have already intimated, we may discern the gradual development of the legend in the Gospel narratives. By the time Mark wrote it had apparently been recognized as an historical event. That writer, as we have already indicated, presents the first variant of the rumor after it has been adopted by Christ's followers. He merely states that Jesus had instructed His disciples to enter a neighboring village and procure a colt on which no one had ever sat. There is reference here, as we have said, to but one animal, but its classification is not given. It is merely a colt, whether of a horse or an ass is not indicated. When later Matthew narrates the event, we at once detect the entrance of the Dionysian variant, for the unclassified "colt" has become an ass, in fact two asses, for mother and colt are both mentioned. Here we discern a curious turn of the story. For Matthew, as already indicated, true to his method, insisted on discovering some Scriptural passage that would prophesy the act of Jesus riding on an ass, converting the once derisive rumor into a serious fulfillment of prophetic utterance. But as the prophecy in Scripture referred to two asses instead of one, Matthew heedlessly quotes it. However about one hundred years or more later, when John writes his Gospel, the various rumors have been reduced to a simpler form.

This writer represents Jesus as being pressed upon by a great crowd, seething with curiosity to look at the Man who

had just raised a dead man from the grave where he had lain till his body began to putrify. So anxious was the crowd to see Him that He found it difficult to keep His feet, when, as John says, having found an ass he "sat thereon." He says nothing about sending the disciples to find an animal on which no man had ever sat, or about two animals as Matthew had insisted. Merely one beast is mentioned and that one, Jesus himself having observed, he immediately employed to save Himself from the pressure of the crowd.[25]

So rumors grow; and it seems certainly no exaggeration to assume that the entire story, so dramatically narrated in the Gospels, of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on the back of an humble donkey, may have arisen out of the derisive insinuation that He, who had been seen in the company of wine-bibbing votaries of Bacchus, was also a follower of that deity, as renegade Jews were accused of being.

XI

To illustrate still further how these Gospel "Lives of Jesus" were probably created with a view of fitting them into the psychology of certain epochs, or to accommodate some previously conceived programme, consider that bit of fiction, to which I have already referred incidentally, honored alone in the Gospel according to Matthew, relating to the alleged massacre of all infants in Bethlehem under two years of age, executed at the command of Herod that he might capture the mysterious Son of Mary.

There is not one scrap of profane evidence to sustain the historical accuracy of the allegation. It would certainly be astonishing, if such a massacre actually occurred, that Josephus as well as all the rabbis of that age who were bitterly incensed against Herod, passed it by in silence.

And why, we are forced to ask, if it was an historical occur-

[25] John xii: 14, 15.

rence, did all the other Gospels ignore it? We find no other reference at all to it, except in the apochryphal book of The Protevangelion, which probably copied it from Matthew.

Could it be possible that whoever wrote the Gospel according to Matthew had become acquainted with the fact that a similar saga had been recorded in Hindoo writings concerning Krishna, the Savior of his people? Sir William Jones, the Orientalist, has informed us about it. He says: "Krishna's life was concealed through fear of the reigning tyrant, Kansa, who at the time of his birth ordered all new born babes to be slain, yet this wonderful babe was preserved." [26]

This supposed event in the life of Krishna may have been bruited among the wandering warriors of Rome, hearing of which the writer of Matthew wove it into his story of the Christ. It is at least remarkable that two such similar massacres should be attributed to two reigning tyrants, whose provinces or principalities were so far apart. However, if Matthew did appropriate the fiction from pagan sources, as it was his especial purpose to convert the intractable Jews, he finds it necessary to blend the fabrication with some Hebraic Scripture. Therefore, happily discovering a text in Hosea, he brings it into service. "Out of Egypt have I called my son," exclaimed the Lord to Hosea. In those cryptic words Matthew discovered sufficient prophecy to be applied to the checkered career of the infant Hero of Palestine. To show how recklessly Matthew drags those ancient texts by the ears to uphold his narrative, observe that Hosea is distinctly referring to a past event in the life of the Israelites, on which he is commenting, and in no way intimates that he is anticipating a future occurrence. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt," are the words.[27] Matthew garbles the passage to force it into a prophecy of the young child of

[26] *Asiatic Researches,* Vol I, p. 259; also quoted in Doane's *Bible Parallels.*

[27] Hosea xi: 1.

Mary. But Hosea's words so palpably refer to the escape of the Jews from the Egyptian Pharaoh and their conquest of Canaan, according to the Hebrew tradition, one stands amazed that one could be so bold as to twist it into any sort of reference to the Nazarene who was not to appear, at least in literature, for many centuries afterward.

However, Matthew's perplexity must have been considerable in so shaping his story that he could present some reason why the Lord should say that He had called His Son out of Egypt, when He had already recorded His birth at Bethlehem. But having asserted that Hosea's words contained a prophecy relating to the infancy of the Savior the ingenuity of Matthew did not fail him in discovering the way out of his embarrassing predicament. Knowing how bitterly the Jews of that period feared and hated Herod, possibly their sympathy might be intrigued, and their attention drawn favorably toward the Savior, if he could convince them that Herod had committed the unheard of butchery of the infants of Bethlehem. Thus he invents the story of the Herodian massacre and the consequent flight of the Holy Family into Egypt, from whence, when the sky is clear, they may return to Nazareth. In this manner were the words of Hosea literally fulfilled, according to Matthew.

But the story is utterly absurd and absolutely unfounded in fact. "If this massacre had ever really taken place the fathers and mothers of these innocent children would certainly have appealed to Cyrenius [28] against so frightful a crime. Neither

[28] Incidentally let me here animadvert on an important point. The fact that there was no appeal to Cyrenius, nor was there any indignation on the part of the Jews then living, indicates that this Gospel of Matthew could not have been published till a long time after the date usually assigned. It must have appeared at a time when all the Jews who could have known anything of such an event had passed away, otherwise they would certainly have either denied the assertion as a fabrication of Matthew or have corroborated it and justified its record. That the first historical corroboration is found, if indeed even then, not till the fourth century, indicates that Matthew's Gospel must have appeared not much earlier than that. Perhaps the critics who insist that the Gospel was not

Tacitus nor any contemporary historian, mentions it. Josephus and the rabbis who were violent against Herod are silent respecting it. Marcrobius, who lived in the fourth century, is the only heathen author who can be quoted to support the story. Voltaire,[29] however, says that the ancient copies of Marcrobius did not contain the passage." [30]

XII

Lastly, with a view to understanding how these Gospel stories may have been conceived let us study the varying inscriptions said to have been placed over the tomb of Jesus. In Mark we read merely that Pilate had ordered the sardonic or sarcastic inscription to read: "THE KING OF THE JEWS." But in Matthew we find that the inscription read: "THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS." Now it is almost universally admitted that Mark's Gospel was prior to that of Matthew's. That being so, doubtless some time elapsed between the appearance of the two publications. Now, we must recall that even during the supposed existence of Jesus there was a serious dispute as to whether the body that was said to have been resurrected was a phantom or actual flesh and blood. Thomas refused to believe that the body which appeared in "the upper room" after the death of Jesus was actually His, until substantial evidence was presented which seemed to satisfy him. But there were doubtless many other doubting Thomases who were not vouchsafed sufficient evidence to convince them. Indeed we know there were; for out of these doubters developed the heretical sect known as the Docetes who throughout their entire existence insisted that the body

known earlier than the middle of the third century are justified in their conclusion. Either that must be true, or the entire narrative of the massacre is an interpolation inserted a century or more after the generally admitted date of publication ascribed to Matthew's Gospel.

[29] Dict. Phil. Vol. 4.

[30] *Critical Examination of the Gospels.* Longmans, Green & Co.

of Jesus was a phantom. Does it not stand to reason, therefore, that (such doubters existing even at that time, whose propaganda might vitiate the evidence of the resurrection) Matthew, to obviate such a danger, invented the inscription which would convince all who saw it that the King of the Jews, whom Pilate ordered slain and was buried at that spot, was none other than the Jesus of the Gospels? Hence he substantially qualifies Mark's inscription which might have referred to some other king. All doubt, after that, of the burial of an actual body of flesh and blood which afterwards arose in the resurrection, would be neutralized.

Moreover whoever suggested the Matthew inscription might have been fearful that the inscription recorded in Mark might be mistaken as a reference to another king of Israel, Antigonus,[31] who had been alleged to have been crucified by the Romans, the only King of the Jews ever thus executed.

These studies lead us into something of an appreciation of the manner in which the Gospels might have been conceived and constructed to satisfy the psychological demands of passing epochs.

As I remarked at the beginning of these essays, all writers of "The Life of Jesus" read into his character their own temperamental idiosyncrasies or the dispositions of changing periods of time. It is supposed according to a legend emanating from the pen of Papias in the first century that Mark wrote his Gospel to emphasize the importance of Peter in the apostolic college; whereas it is supposed that Luke wrote his Gospel (and The Acts as well) to exhibit the authority of Paul; but Matthew, as indicated by internal features, published his Gospel to overawe and convince the recalcitrant Jews of his day.

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[31] Antigonus was the last of the Asmonean priest-kings whom Dion Cassius (XLIX: 22) says was bound to a stake (crucified) in B. C. 37. See Robertson's *Pagan Christs*, p. 181.

Hence entirely in Matthew and partially in Mark, Jesus is still a Jewish ceremonialist. All his sayings and performances are supported and sanctioned by assumed prophetic scriptural passages. But, as we shall now proceed to illustrate, in Luke Jesus has become a cosmopolite and the Paulinian appeal to the Gentiles is palpable and undisguised.

CHAPTER IV

SECRET PURPOSE OF THE AUTHOR WHO WROTE THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

WHAT TRANSPIRED DURING FIRST CENTURY CAUSING LUKE'S NARRATIVE?—EPISODICAL SUGGESTIONS IN THE APOCRYPHAL "PROTEVANGELION"—WHY LUKE DETAILS STORY OF JOHN'S CONCEPTION AND BIRTH—INTIMATE YOUTHFUL ANECDOTES ABOUT JESUS —LUKE'S AND MATTHEW'S RESPECTIVE LITERARY BACKGROUNDS —HINT OF SOURCES IN LUKE'S PREAMBLE—LUKE'S SUPPRESSION OF PETER IN FAVOR OF PAUL—CRISIS IN THE EARLY CHURCH— PAGAN PSYCHOLOGY OF LUKE'S JESUS—LUKE'S MYTHOLOGY COMPARED WITH APOCRYPHAL ACCOUNTS

For reasons which we shall perceive as we proceed with our studies, the Lukan Gospel contains material replete with more human interest than the two preceding ones. On this account Luke's Hero is far more ingratiating, and the stories or anecdotes he has introduced have always been more popular and lead to a more rounded and comprehensive biography than what had previously appeared.

For one thing, he has given us a far more detailed portraiture of his hero, cast in a frame of more intimate biographical material. In the preceding narratives Jesus had been presented either as one already mature and fully developed with very slight historical background, or with lineaments palpably moulded out of data borrowed from ancient Jewish and scriptural legend. Mark seems scarcely aware of any ancestry attributed to his hero; projecting Him at the time of His

maturity abruptly into the arena of life's activities. Here there is no reference to the manner of His generation or aught that relates to the period of His infancy. His characteristics are distinctly human and only slightly sublimated with supernatural attributes.

But Matthew, resolved upon overawing recalcitrant Jews, projects the subject of his biography at once as a divine personage, presaged by angelic sponsors, whose human genealogy is meticulously outlined, yet wholly neglects the period of His adolescence and early life.

Something must have transpired in the theological and religious world during the first century of the Christian era which called for a more perfectly developed biography. It was doubtless found necessary to answer the popular curiosity as to how Jesus conducted Himself during His youthful years, how He was educated, under what influences He was reared, who were His teachers and whether during His infancy He had already exhibited any anticipation of His supernatural powers. The curiosity of the people as Matthew asserts was greatly aroused. "Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?" Merely by way of intimation, or as we might say, parenthetically, Matthew glimpses his Hero's family relations and His obscure social position; but beyond that he grants us no intimate knowledge of His adolescence or youthful period.

That the general curiosity about the Savior's earliest years and the source of His strange powers required some satisfaction is manifested in the apocryphal gospels, especially the Protevangelion and the Infancy, where numerous incredible miracles are ascribed to Jesus even while yet in His cradle. The episodes in Luke that reveal the period of adolescence and infancy of the Savior are undoubtedly to be catalogued with

these, although it must be acknowledged that Luke's writings are characterized with much restraint, when compared with the apocryphal books. But whether fact or fiction Luke tells us many things about the Hero not revealed in either of the two preceding Gospels.

Matthew's account of the conception and birth of Jesus, though startlingly introduced in spite of the silence of Mark, had been rather vague and perhaps too suggestive. It had probably caused the rumor that this so-called "Son of God" had been illegitimately generated. For Matthew had represented Joseph, the paternal parent by proxy, as unequivocably suspicious of his espoused's loyalty. He states that "Joseph, being a just man (that is probably conventional) was minded to put her away privily," that he might avoid public scandal. (To realize how wide spread that scandal appears to have been one must read the account given in the Protevangelion.)

It was it seems to me because of this unhappy intimation by Matthew concerning the apparent illegitimacy of Jesus that it probably became necessary for some one so to gloss the original account as effectively to "lay the ghost" of such inauspicious gossip. Therefore Luke in his Gospel seems to attempt to neutralize the scandal of the alleged illegitimacy of Jesus by balancing it against that of John's.

Matthew nor Mark had given us any information of the history of John, save in a few incidents where his career crossed the path of Jesus. But who he was and whether a person of historical significance they leave us uninformed save in one passage where Jesus intimates his renown. They announced him as "one crying in the wilderness" who was the forerunner of Him "the latchet of whose shoes" he was "not worthy to unloose."

Luke, however, recognizing him as a well known historical character (one as we shall see in the course of these essays who had been acknowledged as the Messiah before the advent of Jesus) thinks it necessary to give a detailed account of the

manner of his conception and generation. One wonders why Luke thought it expedient or necessary to present so elaborate and dramatic an account of this, insomuch as John is (in the Gospel narratives) related only indirectly to the career of Jesus. As I have said, John had been acclaimed the Messiah before the appearance of Jesus, and there had actually developed a sort of mutual contention or rivalry between the Johannites and Jesuanites, after Jesus had become conspicuous, which is hinted at in the story of John (during his imprisonment) sending his emissaries to Jesus to enquire whether He was the expected One or not. The prominence and importance of John is thus incidentally acknowledged by Jesus: "Among men that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist."

Now, if the multitudinous followers of John could be convinced that the manner of his conception and birth were supernatural like that of Jesus, the ugly gossip caused by Matthew's unfortunate insinuation might be neutralized and silenced. None had ever said anything derogative of John. He was universally honored and respected. If then the Jews who hesitated not to follow in the wake of John could be assured that his generation was as illegitimate as that of Jesus, and both alike sanctioned by messengers from heaven, their scandalous ridiculing of Jesus on that account might be stayed.[1]

[1] Luke's disproportionate presentation of John has been noticed by others but with no attempt to explain the reason. As F. J. Foakes-Jackson in his *St. Paul:* "It is here to be observed" (commenting on Acts xiii: 23–26), he says, "that the great importance given to John in Acts is hard to account for unless his appearance had produced more stir in the Jewish world than did that of Jesus. It is remarkable however that his name never occurs in a Pauline or any other epistle in the New Testament, or even in the Apocalypse." But the explanation of this fact, it seems to me, is simple: John, as I have said, had already been universally proclaimed as Messiah whose disciples were afterwards overcome by Paul's preaching and accepted Jesus instead. The fact that John's name had completely died out among the disciples of Jesus after Paul's conquest is also easily accounted for in the explanation I have already given. When Paul's Jesus came to the front John was completely ignored and his name is thereafter lost to Christian literature.

II

Luke was, also, the first of the biographers to lift the curtain from the early years of Jesus and report some of His youthful deeds. The apocryphal biographers imitated him and using their pregnant imagination greatly enlarged upon his suggestion. Luke alone, for instance, records the pleasing incident of the lost Child, who when but twelve years old wandered away from His frightened parents who at length found Him in the temple instructing the amazed rabbis. A little later we shall show the probable profane source from which Luke might have procured the substance of the tale.

But for the moment we wish to point out certain other profane sources from which both Luke and Matthew might secure the elements of certain incidents in their respective biographical narratives. It is very suggestive that Matthew alone refers to the appearance of the three wise men who came from the East to do honor to the Holy Child, while Luke alone records the story of the shepherds and the heavenly jubilation of the angels over the birth of the Infant.

Let us recall that Matthew avowedly wrote to engage the interest of the Jews exclusively (his Jesus said "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel"), while Luke's purpose was to intrigue the pagan world (as we shall in a moment demonstrate). In the light of these facts let us study why these two writers glorified the same event in a manner so divergent.

Matthew had for his background the Rabbinical and Talmudic legends for his story, while Luke, undoubtedly a learned scholar and probably a Gentile convert, was acquainted with pagan lore which complexioned his theme. Hence we may assume, without violence to historic possibility, that Matthew was acquainted with the legend of Jewish patriarchs and prophets concerning the brilliant star that was said to have appeared at the time of the birth of Moses, which was reputed

to have been seen by the Magi of Egypt who immediately reported it to their king.[2]

We assume that whoever wrote Matthew, if a Jew, must have been acquainted with these legends. Therefore we may feel confident that the story of the star, if not consciously adapted from these rumors, might at least have been unconsciously derived from that source. Perhaps we are not justified in asserting that Matthew invented the legend, but it is at least possible, if not, indeed, probable, that in an age so fraught with "pious frauds," he might have thought that something like what happened at the births of Abraham and Moses should have taken place at the birth of Jesus. Therefore as a fitting background for so stupendous an event he represented the appearance of the magi in vague remembrance of what he had heard about the patriarchs. However, it is truly difficult to force ourselves not to believe that there was some conscious effort made by Matthew to demonstrate that the birth of the Holy Child (the Messiah) actually occurred at the time of the appearance of a strange star, for he doubtless had heard or read the Talmudic saga: "The life and portion of children hang not on righteousness but on their star." And he may be supposed to have known that specific prescription of what would occur at the advent of the anointed One, stated in The Sohar: "A star will rise in the East, shining in great brightness," and again, "A star will rise in the east, *which is the star of the Messiah,* and will remain in the east fifteen days."[3]

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[2] See Higgins's *Anacalypsis* and Geike's *Life of Christ* and Doane's *Bible Parallels*. Also, in Baring-Gould's *Legends of the Patriarchs* we read: "On the night of the birth of Abraham, son of Terah, his friends were feasting in his house. On leaving, late at night, they observed an unusual star in the East. It seemed to run from one quarter of the heavens to another and devour four stars which were there. All gazed in astonishment at this wondrous sight, 'Truly' they said, 'this can signify nothing else but that Terah's new-born son will become great and powerful.'" p. 135.

[3] Geike's *Life of Christ,* Vol. I: p. 145.

Surely, to say the least, here is sufficient legendary lore to tempt one to appropriate it in the construction of a biography purporting to be that of the awaited Messiah, whose avowed purpose was the conviction of "stiff-necked" Jews.

On the other hand, the Lukan version of the song of the heavenly host at the birth of Jesus is so similar to what was already in vogue among pagan populations that one can scarcely doubt its adaptation from that source. Alexandria was the great focal centre of the commerce and religions of the world. From that centre doubtless radiated ideas and philosophies to distant provinces and peoples. It is scarcely possible, or at least probable, that Dr. Luke (or whatever learned scholar wrote the Gospel) could have been ignorant of the general purport of this legendary lore, especially as we shall later demonstrate Paul was apparently saturated with it.

Hindoo and Buddhistic legends must have abounded among the Alexandrian philosophers. In more ancient times Plato revealed his familiarity with them in many of his discussions and especially in his knowledge of the continent of Atlantis, which he says was communicated to him from Eastern sources. Therefore, the writer of Luke might have heard about the story told at Krishna's birth when "the quarters of the horizon were irradiated with joy, as if moonlight were diffused over the whole earth." He may have heard that "the spirits and nymphs of heaven danced and sang and the clouds emitted low, pleasing sounds and poured down rains of flowers," at the birth of the god.

He might even have learned of what occurred when Buddha was born, which, as related by Beale, in his history of Buddha, is so like that which Luke narrates of the birth of Jesus that the latter somewhat sounds like a copy of the former: "The attending spirits who surrounded the virgin Maya (Mary?) and the infant Savior, singing praises of the Blessed One, said 'All joy to you, Queen Maya, rejoice and be glad for the child you have borne is holy.' And all the hosts

of heaven sang out 'Today Bodhisatwa is born on earth to give joy and peace to men and devas, to shed light in dark places and to give sight to the blind.' ''[4]

We are able by such comparisons to discern the possible sources from which the Gospels derived some of the incidents narrated and the reasons why they vary and consist of propaganda rather than verified history. It would appear that each Gospel was written with some specific object in view instigated by current criticism or invidious gossip, subsequent to the time when Paul, as we surmise, launched the theretofore-unheard-of mystical hero upon the attention of mankind.

However, Luke undertakes to give Jesus a more precise and positive historical setting than either Mark or Matthew, because after their Gospels appeared the people were unconvinced that Jesus was a genuine character and not a metaphysical ideal or a disembodied phantom. Luke, therefore, presumes to circumscribe the period of Christ's birth, by limiting it to the time when Caesar Augustus decreed the enrollment of the entire population of the empire, while Quirinius was Governor of Syria.

Likewise Luke alone informs us of the age of the young prophet when He entered on His ministry, but this accords so precisely with the prescriptive age demanded for those who would enter the Jewish priesthood that it looks very much like a copy of the Mosaic formula. He also informs us that the word of God came to John, while Pontius Pilate was Governor of Judea, and during the dual high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas. This, of course, was impossible for only one high priest could hold office at any one period. This was an unfortunate slip for it would seem to indicate that the writer of Luke was not acquainted with Jewish usage and perhaps was not himself a member of the Jewish constituency.

Such inadvertencies on the part of Luke and the secret they suggest remind one of a passage in an argument of

[4] Compare Luke ii: 9 and 13, 14.

Faustus, a Manichean follower of the Christ, who contends against the authoritarian St. Augustine, while seeking to justify his own orthodoxy. Says Bishop Faustus:[5] "For many things have been inserted by your ancestors in the speeches of our Lord which though put forth under His name agree not with His faith; especially, as has often been proved by us, that these things were not written by Christ nor by the apostles, but a long while after their assumption, by I know not what sort of HALF JEWS not even agreeing with themselves, who made up their tales out of reports and opinions merely; and yet fathering the whole upon the names of the apostles of the Lord or on those who were supposed to have followed the apostles, they mendaciously pretend that they had written their lies and conceits, according to them."

It was perhaps easier for Faustus, in that early period of Christianity's development, to discover the "fly in the ointment" than for us so far removed in time; nevertheless by reading carefully between the lines, we may perceive how ingeniously Luke prepared an historical setting for his soteriological hero; yet unwittingly exposed the legendary origin of the Gospel narrative.

In his preamble or prologue, he informs Theophilus, a probable Greek convert or pupil, as follows: "Forasmuch as many have taken it in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee . . . that thou mightest know," etc.

This naïve and evidently unconscious confession on the part of Luke clearly disestablishes the assumption that the Gospels were inspired and were written under the authority or by direct dictation of the Holy Spirit. The theory of theologians

[5] Quoted by Dr. Lardner, *Credibility of Gospel History*, Vol. II., p. 221. See also Taylor's *Diegesis*, p. 114.

is that the four Gospels of the New Testament (which out of a nameless number that were published at the time have alone been accepted in the canon) were produced under such significant circumstances as to demonstrate their authentic inspiration.

Had it not been, therefore, for this singular confession on the part of Luke, that the Holy Spirit had nothing to do with the creation of the Gospels, the indifferent scholarship of ecclesiastics might have kept the world forever ignorant of the fact that there had been many other once authenticated gospels published simultaneously or at least contemporaneously during the earliest period of the Christian Era. Nor would they have been forced into the arduous task of explaining why, among "the many who have taken it in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters," these four Gospels alone should have received the stamp of the divine sanction. They were, as a consequence, driven to the extreme absurdity of declaring that there were only four Gospels that were approved by God because there are only four corners to the earth; and to the dramatic declaration that only those four Gospels, among all that had been written, when the council had assembled to determine which shall be regarded canonical, leaped up from the floor on to the table around which the sage ecclesiastics had gathered!

But Luke's unintentional disclosure is even more devastating to the claim of divine inspiration. For he intimates that the writers of the Gospel narratives did not give us first-hand information concerning the career of Jesus. He implies that they got their information as he did from "eyewitnesses," but fails to inform us who those witnesses were; he mentions no names; he cites no records. Yet he incidentally implies that they must have lived a long time before he "had traced the course of all things from the first," else he would not have used the phrase "from the beginning." Otherwise he would have said "recently" or "a little while ago" to indicate the

proximity of the alleged events he narrates. When, therefore, he says that he derived his information from those who "from the beginning were eyewitnesses," he can only mean that whoever they were they must have existed long before his day. In short, Luke testifies that when he, and by implication the other Synoptists, felt themselves impelled ("took it in hand") to "write concerning those matters," they recorded only rumors, legends and traditions (floating gossip) with which they had become acquainted.

While this admission seriously enough affects the validity and authenticity of the "narratives," Luke makes the matter even worse by implying that God did not at all enter into the transaction, but that he himself "traced the course of all things accurately" just as any profane historian would attempt to do if he were investigating original records. But in Luke's case (and he implies that the same applies to the other two Synoptists) he devaluates his achievement by failing to indicate the authorities on which he professes to depend. How much worth would we attribute to ordinary historians if, when they made quotations of alleged records or repeated the hearsay evidence of witnesses to certain events, they left the names of the witnesses and the titles of the records utterly blank?

It is quite improbable that the apostles themselves were the source of Luke's information, if that Luke was the same individual as is mentioned in Paul's epistles, insomuch as he was continually with Paul in his travels, and Paul refused any intimate association with the apostles and distinctly denounced any other than his own gospel or revelation of "glad tidings" as unworthy of his notice. It is quite unlikely, then, that that Dr. Luke would have reverted to the two preceding Synoptics as sources of material for his own narrative, even if they were at the time in existence, which doubtless they were not; and certainly if the apostles, who were originally Nazarenes and strict followers of the Mosaic code were the

alleged "eyewitnesses" to whom Luke refers, they could not have provided him with the substance of the narrative of the third Synoptic, which is a distinct appeal to the Gentile world. The fact, however, as is admitted by all scholars, that the Luke who wrote the third Gospel had both Mark's and Matthew's Gospels before him, would indicate that he could not have been the same individual as the physician, who was the fellow traveler with Paul, for he must have long been dead when the Gospel according to Luke appeared.

Be that, however, as it may, the question still is to be answered whence did the author of the Lukan Gospel acquire his information. (*See Appendix D.*)

III

There was a tradition, already referred to (emanating from a saying of Papias, who died in 195 A. D., that Mark took down his story from information Peter had given him), to the effect that the Markan Gospel represents the Petrine party while the Lukan Gospel represents the influence and teachings of Paul or the Paulinists. While criticism demonstrates that Papias could not have referred to our Markan Gospel, because of innumerable discrepancies,[6] yet the fact that the tradition generally prevailed among the pristine fathers indicates that the Gospel of Mark and that of Luke in some way did reflect the opinions and contentions of the two opposing parties. If there be any foundation to this tradition it demonstrates that both these Gospels were, in a sense, dogmatic tracts, advocating the one, the leadership of Peter, and the other, the leadership of Paul. In short these Evangelists assumed the office of propagandists, undertaking to promulgate certain opinions or doctrines mutually contradictory or at least discrepant and antagonistic. The author of Acts, who is universally accepted as also the author of the third

[6] See *Supernatural Religion*, Vol. I., p. 448 ff.

Synoptic, on every possible occasion seems to undertake the subordination of Peter, representing him as subservient to Paul's theological innovations. When Paul with Barnabas went up to the Jerusalem council to defend their evangelization before the elders of the Church against the opposition of the Nazarene Jews (the Jews who had accepted Jesus as the Messiah), Peter is made the chief protagonist for Paul and his co-worker contending that their teachings were in perfect accord with Jewish tradition.[7]

There were two serious crises which confronted the apostles after Paul's arrival in their ranks; both these crises indicate the triumph of Paul over all the original followers of Jesus; the first was the fierce contention between Peter and Paul at Antioch;[8] which resulted in Paul's complete subjugation of Peter; and the second was the severe test of friendship between Paul and Barnabas, on account of John Mark, which resulted in the permanent separation of the two leaders of the Paulinian faction. A study of these situations perhaps reveals the reason why Luke, as he says, "took it in hand" to write his narrative. His object being apparently to exalt the leadership of Paul, he employs these two scenes as recorded in Acts (Chapter xv), relative to Paul's triumph over the Judaizers and the quarrel between Paul and Barnabas, to demonstrate the manner in which Paul acquired his supremacy over Peter, the weak and vacillating apostle. Luke makes it appear that Paul gained a quick and decisive triumph, reducing Peter at last to a secondary character in the development of the church. With one swift snap of the lash of authority Paul drives him to his knees, yet through his agency he completely transforms the Church's theology and lures the innocent Nazarenes away from their Jewish ideals, as taught by their Master, to intricacies of his own fascinating metaphysics woven of both Hebraic and Hellenistic strains. How-

[7] Acts xv: 6–12.
[8] Gal. ii: 11.

ever, this is contrary to the tradition of the times, as we shall soon show, which indicate that Peter was recalcitrant and waged a long warfare against Paul.

But Luke's record of the second serious crisis does not make so manifest, at least on the surface, the cause of the rupture between Barnabas and Paul, which afforded an occasion for Paul to extend still further his self-assumed authority. On the surface it appears merely that for some unknown reason or for a reason very vaguely stated, Paul refused to harbor John Mark and practically asked for his resignation. When after many years of unexampled energy Paul and Barnabas had established numerous churches, Paul suddenly suggests to Barnabas that they undertake a sojourn over the old field and again visit the religious communities they had established. Barnabas consents on the condition that John Mark go with them. Paul objects but the only reason given for Paul's objection is that on one occasion Mark had left them and gone back to Jerusalem. Luke's apparent purpose in recording this quarrel was to show why nothing more would be related of Barnabas and Mark in his record, but thereafter Paul alone would be the subject of his story. But there must have been a more profound cause for this historic clash and separation between the two mutually admiring and devoted leaders of the early Church than that set forth by Luke.

Curiously enough historians as a rule, while finding it impossible not to concede that there was a sharp break between the leaders, yet treat the whole affair as if it were merely a temperamental conflict. But was not the real reason this, that Paul suspected the loyalty of Mark, and feared, if he permitted him to continue with them in their travels among the established churches, he would create a disturbance?

That Paul would have been angry with Mark because he left them at Pamphylia and went back to Jerusalem merely temporarily, again returning, when circumstances permitted,

seems unlikely. But when we recall that the emissaries of the church at Jerusalem [9] had continually annoyed Paul and interfered with his success, that he himself cut away entirely from the communicants of that church and would have nothing to do with "them of the circumcision," may we not discover in this fact some intelligent reason why Paul rejected Mark?

There seems to be an invitation to the reader to search between the lines for the real meaning of the words in Acts xv: 38, when Paul objects to keeping Mark in their company. Barnabas had suggested that Mark should be taken along. "But Paul thought it not good to take with them him who withdrew from them from Pamphylia, and *went not with them to the work.*" In the phrase I have italicized it seems to me is to be discerned the real reason why Paul objected. On account of Mark's once leaving them and returning to the Jerusalem church, a coldness had grown up between him and Paul. Had Mark become jealous of the leadership of Paul? Or had he begun to discover such discrepancies between Paul's teachings and those at Jerusalem that he had aroused Paul's antagonism? [10] This is, of course, a very puzzling problem and at such a distance it is naturally difficult to discern the true motives of action, especially when so briefly described. Nevertheless, as Foakes-Jackson says: "At any rate directly Paul became the leader Mark withdrew and sailed back to Jerusalem." Insomuch as Paul was then struggling for leadership and meeting foes within and without the Church on every hand, is it not supposable that he seriously suspected Mark of disloyalty, when, at a critical moment in Paul's career, he suddenly deserts the missionaries and goes back to the fountain head of all

[9] "There was evidently a section of the Jewish believers in Jesus to whom Paul's teaching was as distasteful as it was to orthodox Jews. No sooner did he establish a church in Galatia than representatives of this party visited it in order to undo his work." (F. J. Foakes-Jackson's *St. Paul*, p. 212.)

[10] See *Life of St. Paul*, F. J. Foakes-Jackson, p. 125.

his troubles, namely Jerusalem, whence "certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren saying: Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved."[11]

Since, by hypothesis, Luke is undertaking to demonstrate the authority of Paul as the true interpreter of the teachings of Jesus in contrast with that of the Judaizers, it would seem to him unwise, since at one time Mark might have wavered in his devotion to Paul, to set forth the true reason for his desertion. But the fact that Paul would not consent to keep Mark any longer in his company indicates that he suspected him. That is, insomuch as Paul was introducing such revolutionary and disruptive tenets into the minds of the Nazarenes, Mark may have felt that he was going too far and he could not continue to endorse him. Then, after again communing at Jerusalem, he feels Paul may be right and so returns to him; but when he gets back Paul nevertheless suspects him and will have nothing more to do with him. Though in after years, when Paul's labors abundantly prevailed, he seems to have become reconciled and commends Mark.[12] All this it seems to me proves that Paul was forcing on the original disciples a theology he had assimilated in the East, which was unlike anything Jesus as a Jew could have endorsed, and that Luke so shapes the narrative as to make it appear that Paul's teaching is in perfect accord with Jewish tradition. Therefore he could not in plain language declare the reason Mark deserted Paul at Pamphylia, and merely suggests the true cause in Luke's cryptic words: "He withdrew from Pamphylia and went not with them to the work."

Here we discover the possible reason why Luke "took it in hand" to write another narrative, in which the story of the Nazarene might be so related as to make it appear that Jesus was sent not only to the house of Israel, as contended in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, but as well to the entire popu-

[11] Acts xv: 1.
[12] Col. iv: 10; II Tim. iv: 11.

lation of the pagan or gentile world. That is, Luke writes as Paul's propagandist.

But how shall this be accomplished? Does Luke possess facts of which the other writers had been ignorant; or will he be able to prove that they overlooked certain teachings of Jesus that would tend to popularize Paul's leadership?

That Luke's Gospel is a virtual tract to sustain Paul becomes apparent on careful examination. But the implications are so vague and insinuating that were not our attention called to them they could easily be overlooked and only slight variations among the Synoptists be observed. For instance: in Matthew, Peter responds to the question of Jesus to His disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?" (wishing to call from them a confession that he is not John the Baptist returned to life, or Elijah or Jeremiah, as some had insinuated) by saying "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Thereupon Jesus blesses him above all the other disciples, exclaiming, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."[13] Then not only does he exalt Peter but establishes his primacy in the college of the disciples, by saying[14] "And thou art Peter (rock) and upon this rock will I build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." As Jesus established no Church and did not anywhere else indicate that He intended to, this passage is undoubtedly an interpolation by a later editor; nevertheless the sentiment expressed in favor of Peter is consistent with the general tenor of Matthew's Gospel. The interpolation merely emphasizes this tenor. But when Luke refers to this incident, it is suggestive that he fails to mention the lofty praise of Peter by the Savior, and merely records the injunction of Jesus that the disciples should tell no man what he (Peter) had divined. Evidently the redactors who could find in Matthew a consistent place in which to in-

[13] Matt. xvi: 17.
[14] Verse 18.

troduce the high honor conferred on Peter by the Master could find no similar opportunity to insert it in the Lukan Gospel; for the latter apparently purposely avoided exalting the favorite disciple too highly. Else, we must insist, why did Luke so twist the conversation, as recorded in Matthew, that the extraordinary recognition of Peter and the supreme office conferred on him simmered down to a mere injunction from Jesus that he should keep his silence and let no man know that the apostle had recognized the true nature of his person?[15]

It is noticeable, too, that Mark (whose gospel some modern critics despite the Papias legend think was composed to lend authority to the Paulinian faction) records the alleged conversation in the same manner as Luke. The variation is found only in Matthew, where alone the importance of Peter is emphasized, clearly contrasted with Luke's and Mark's version.[16]

IV

Once more; Matthew seems to reveal the close intimacy between Jesus and Peter notwithstanding the Savior is aware of the latter's temperamental weaknesses. When Peter asks the Master what his own reward and that of the other disciples shall be for surrendering everything to follow Him, Jesus, in Matthew, assures him that they shall sit with Him judging the twelve tribes of Israel when He Himself shall be enthroned.[17] But Luke so alters this passage as to weaken its force and reduce it to an implied rebuke of Peter.[18] Luke alone introduces into this conversation the demeaning interpretation of Peter's motive in asking such a question when Jesus reminds him that "the kings of the Gentiles" possess lordship; that if he con-

[15] Luke ix: 20–21.
[16] But it is possible that the Markan Gospel was edited in order to make it accord with the Lukan version of the story.
[17] Matt. xix: 27–28.
[18] Luke xxii: 31–34.

templates reward he should not be as the Gentiles, but, to become a chief he must be as one that serves. Then as if to point the rebuke direct to the questioning disciple he cries: "Simon, Simon, behold Satan asked to have you that he might sift you as wheat; but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not." Considering that Luke had before him the record of the two other Gospels in which the rebuke of Peter by Jesus does not appear, it would indicate that Luke must have had some motive in introducing the passage so humiliating to Peter.

I am merely calling attention to these slight differences and inconsistencies between the different narratives to show how the lives of Jesus were apparently conceived and what motive seemingly prompted their promulgation.

If, however, it be true that the author of The Acts is the same as the author of the Gospel according to Luke then some might surmise that in the former Peter is presented, immediately after the resurrection of Jesus and at the inauguration of the church established by his followers, as chief among the apostles; therefore, the above intimation that Luke seeks to demean him would be inconsistent if not untruthful. However, a careful reading of The Acts will, I think, dissipate that deduction.

True, Peter assumes a most prominent part in the first council; but it will be observed that the substance of his speeches is made to conform to the innovation of Paul's teachings. The Peter who at first addresses the earlier councils as specified in The Acts is distinctively consecrated to the ancient faith of Moses and implicitly trusts the ceremonial code. But when Paul is to become the great protagonist of the new faith, the writer of The Acts compels Peter to change utterly his opinion of the prescriptive restrictions of the code and arm himself with the articles of faith which Paul had proclaimed in his epistles. Thereafter Peter ceases to be the predominant figure among the disciples and is supplanted by Paul. Soon after the remarkable fable which narrates how

Peter was converted from the narrowness of the ceremonial creed to the broad faith of Paul by beholding in a vision the food of the pagans of which God instructed him to partake, he gradually declines in prominence as the figure of Paul arises to become the ultimate cynosure and chief protagonist of the new faith. The writer of The Acts after causing Peter to be converted to Paul's theory that the new faith was intended for pagans or barbarians as well as for Jews, clinches the argument by the incident of Cornelius of Caesarea who having heard of the miracles of Peter sends for him as instructed to do in a dream. When Peter comes to him Cornelius falls down at his feet as if to worship. This gives Peter the occasion to remind Cornelius that he whom he would worship is but a man like himself; thus he is able to inform Cornelius about the transformation of his own religious views. "Ye know yourself," he says, "how it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to join himself or come unto one of another nation; and yet unto me hath God showed that I could not call any man common or unclean; wherefore I came without gainsaying when I was sent for." [19]

The Peter who could conscientiously make such an utterance was certainly not the Peter of the Synoptic Gospels. But the writer of The Acts, apparently to demonstrate the supremacy of Paul through the subordination of Peter, represents the latter as completely subjugated in opinion by the former. In The Acts, in short, we may trace the course of the transformation of the early Nazarenes (who constituted the original followers of the Prophet of Nazareth) to their paganization in the name of the Hero Paul proclaimed and in whose name they became known as Christians.

Also, in The Acts, the tenth chapter, we have an illustration of the manner in which the nascent church, under the leadership of Peter is skilfully transformed from a Nazarene community into an institution patterned after Paul's revolu-

[19] Luke x: 17–35.

tionary theology. Peter is represented as saying after his experience with Cornelius: "Of a truth I perceive God is no respecter of persons"; then following his oration to an assembly of Jews and Gentiles the writer asserts that they were all enswathed in a baptism of the Holy Ghost; "and they of the circumcision that believed (that is the followers of John and Jesus—the Nazarenes) were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost."

At this point, to the Nazarene Jews (who formerly had supposed that under the leadership of Peter and the apostles they alone were to be the beneficiaries of the blessing of Jesus through baptism, who had come only "to the lost sheep of house of Israel"), Peter exclaims that baptism cannot be denied to the Gentiles who have been so manifestly affected by the presence of the Spirit. The scenes in The Acts, illustrating Peter's gradual lapsing from the Nazarene creed to that of Paul's, are so skilfully presented that on first casual reading few could perceive it. The whole story of The Acts in the first twelve chapters, until at last at Antioch Paul severely chastises Peter, reveals the effort of the writer to switch the tendency of the Nazarene Jews (followers of Jesus of Nazareth before Paul's arrival or conversion) away from the exclusiveness, which Jesus so plainly enjoined in his teachings, to the cosmopolitan comprehensiveness of Paul's theology, that once the key is discovered the process becomes very palpable.

It is also suggestive that, after the quarrel at Antioch, when Paul gained such a decisive victory over Peter and the emissaries from the church at Jerusalem, Peter at last utterly fades out of the picture and Paul becomes the supreme cynosure of the times. Also, the apostles and their followers are henceforth no longer known as Nazarenes (their original Jewish appellation) but by the novel Grecian term, Christians.

By gradual stages the transformation from the teachings

of Jesus to those of Paul is thus so skilfully set forth that few seem to discern it.

V

That Luke was projecting a life of Jesus which would directly appeal to the psychology and instinctive apprehension of the Gentile world, especially the Grecians, becomes again evident in his portrayal of the Annunciation. As Mark had entirely omitted this mythological phase of Christ's advent and Matthew had given a somewhat prosaic account of it, Luke, apparently, felt called upon to expand and glorify it in a manner that would strongly appeal to the psychological appreciation of those for whom his Gospel was manifestly written.

Doubtless his Greek pupil, Theophilus, was familiar with the mythological lore of his age. Over the shoulder of this pupil Luke seeks to lure the Greek and "barbarian" nations by painting a picture of the Christ which must have reminded them in some phases of the characteristics of their own gods. The story of the birth of Jesus, therefore, and its accompanying scenes, became in the Gospel of Luke a curious commingling of Hebraic legend and pagan tradition. Apparently unsatisfied with Matthew's bald narrative, which is palpably built on the so-called prophecy of Isaiah and expressed in Jewish phraseology, Luke presents a more resplendent drama characterized with distinct pagan suggestions. Thus, Matthew represents the angel Gabriel as bluntly informing Joseph, the amazed father of a son whom he had not begotten, that "that which is conceived in her (Mary) is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son and thou shalt call his name Jesus."

In Luke's variation of the incident, however, Gabriel's words are marked with a distinct pagan characteristic: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee (Mary) and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; wherefore *also* the *Holy*

Thing which is begotten shall be called *The Son of God!*"

Matthew says he shall be called Jesus: Luke says he shall be called also "the Son of God." Why this difference?

Jesus was a well known Jewish name in that age; there was a high priest called Jesus during the reign of Herod. That name would be appreciated by the Nazarenes who followed the Prophet of Nazareth, as Matthew elsewhere intimates. But that a human being should be called "Son of God" and be begotten by the Holy Spirit, in a manner most mysterious, introduced a situation wholly outside the periphery of Jewish history or psychology. When this expression is used in the Old Testament "it by no means carried the idea of physical descent from and essential unity with God the Father. The Hebrew idiom conveys nothing further than a simple expression of godlikeness" says the *Jewish Encyclopedia.*

Therefore such a miracle as the conception of a "Son of God" by a maiden who was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, is an affair not elsewhere even intimated in any Hebraic legend.

On the contrary, however, the miracle of a god overshadowing a maiden and generating through her "a son of a god" was a very common incident in pagan mythology. As we shall later attempt to show the term "Son of God," as understood in Christian theology, was introduced among the original followers of the Prophet of Nazareth (Nazarenes) by Paul who had imbibed it from pagan sources. Luke, therefore, whose Gospel was palpably written under Paulinian influence, does not have Gabriel announce the name of the "Holy Thing" merely as Jesus (which, indeed, he does incidentally), but more suggestively as "the Son of God"; whereas Matthew, whose Gospel (despite the innovation of Paul) still reveals traces of the original legend of the Nazarene Messiah, does not designate him in the Annunciation by any other name than that of Jesus.

That Luke purposely added the title of Son of God to the

name by which the son of Mary was to be known becomes apparent on carefully studying his language. "Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son and shalt call his name Jesus. . . . The Holy Ghost shall overshadow thee . . . therefore *also* the Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

The force of the Lukan annunciation by Gabriel lies in the intimation of the conjunction "also." Not only shall she conceive in her womb and bring forth a son and call his name Jesus [20] but as the Holy Ghost will overshadow her she shall *also* call that which is to be born of her "The Son of God" [21] Matthew has the angel announce simply that "thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins" (as all the other prophets in Israel sought to do). But in Luke His office is to be far more exalted: "He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High . . . He shall reign over the house of Jacob . . . His kingdom shall have no end."

The semi-pagan proclamation which Luke ascribes to the angel Gabriel, though couched in Hebraic phraseology, would offer no offence to the Grecian ears of Theophilus (whose mythology had often pictured for him the miraculous births of god-begotten heroes); whereas to the Jews it would be a distinct "stumbling block." But when Christian theology began to be promulgated among the "heathen" Luke's ascription of the divine title to the son born of a virgin caused for the theologians no little mischief and embarrassment. Had not both Luke and John insisted upon calling this parthenogenetical "Holy Thing" both "Logos" and "Son of God," the early Christians might have been spared the necessity of illogically defending themselves against Gentile insinuations. We must not overlook the suggestive appreciation of the pagan Roman centurion, who beholding the Crucified One exclaimed instinctively, as the earthquake seemed to roar its disapproval,

[20] Luke i: 31.
[21] v. 35.

"Surely this was a Son of God," as Matthew and Mark record the event, or as in Luke, "surely he was a righteous man."[22] That is, the detonations of the earthquake seemed to indicate to the trembling and affrighted pagans that an innocent man, a righteous leader, such as they had known in their mythology, as a son of some god, had been wrongly executed.

The confusion which befell the pristine fathers in worshipping a virgin-born deity was clearly set forth by Justin Martyr in his Apology where he says, almost waspishly replying to the emperor Adrian: "By declaring the Logos, the first begotten of God, our Master Jesus Christ, to be born of a virgin without any human admixture, we (Christians) say no more in this than what you (pagans) say of those whom you style the Sons of Jove."[23] True enough, despite the phonetic consonance between the terms Son of Jove and Son of Jehovah, the latter term was in this sense never before heard in Jewry, whereas the former was widely known and plentifully acknowledged throughout the pagan world.

VI

Luke in his ardor to convince the gentile world by means of a version of the Christ legend that would instinctively appeal to them, "let the cat out of the bag," as we say colloquially. He knew of course that Theophilus (by that name designating the entire world of Grecian culture) could not have taken umbrage at the title attributed to the Virgin-born Savior, for in substance it was the same as was often attributed to their deified heroes. In his desire to engross their interest Luke proclaims a Redeemer characterized like to their own demi-gods. In short, Luke's Jesus is a semi-gentile deity. Herein we discover the marked distinction between the Matthew Jesus and that of Luke. The former, written to convince the Jews, halt-

[22] Matt. xxvii: 54–55; Mark xv: 39; Luke xxiii: 47.
[23] Justin, *Apology* I: ch. xxii.

ingly utilized an appellation of his hero that would of course offend those whom he sought to convert. As far as possible he avoids the Paulinian connotation implied in the term "Son of God,"[24] and only at last when on trial before the high priest does he suffer his hero to acknowledge the title. Before that the Savior had enjoined silence on the part of His disciples who inferred from His acts that He might be a divinity and rebuked lunatics for shouting out the term at Him.

On the contrary Luke at the very beginning of his narrative exalts his hero as the very Son of God, the Holy Thing that sprung from a womb overmastered by the supreme Spirit of the universe.

Now the full force of the differences in the characterization of the Christ by the Synoptists can only be appreciated when we realize that the unqualified attribution of a divine quality to the Nazarene, the humble Prophet of Nazareth, was the result of Paul's innovation. We shall hereafter show that the original Nazarenes had no conception of this doctrine till Paul invaded their councils and imposed the mystical interpretation of the office of the Christ upon them. In the earlier Gospel of Matthew, therefore, we still find the lingering traces of the purely Jewish interpretation of the office of the Redeemer; but in Luke, and more emphatically in John, as will be demonstrated, the Hellenistic conception becomes prominent and decisive. In the epistle of James, also, which is accepted as a textbook of the ethical theology of the first organization, effected in the name of Jesus (the church at Jerusalem), there is not even a hint of Paul's metaphysics. True he uses the term "the Lord Jesus," but it is conceivable that the term "Lord" was in this instance meant to connote mastership or leadership, in which sense the word is often employed in the older Scripture of the Jews.[25]

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[24] Matt. xvi: 20; Mark viii: 30–33; Matt. xxvi: 63; Luke ix: 21.

[25] In James ii:1, both the King James and the Revised Version, make the passage read: "Hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory," etc. That expression, "the Lord of Glory," as I have elsewhere

And, further, we must remember that the oldest known Christian sect in profane history, which sprung from the Jerusalem branch, the Ebionites, denied the ascription of divinity to Jesus as the Lord, and that in time, because of this attitude, when Paul's theology became the standard, they were ousted from the synagogue of the "faithful" and denounced as heretics. In addition to this we must remember that Mark's Gospel, the oldest of the canonical Gospels, utterly ignores the alleged intervention of the divine agency in the conception and birth of the Savior.

But Luke, who echoes and emphasizes the Paulinian invasion, not only records the incident as did Matthew, but develops it into a drama in which the humble Nazarene becomes the Incarnate Presence of God Himself.

VII

To digress for a moment from the general discussion concerning the admixture of Paul's paganization of the Nazarenic teachings of Jesus, as revealed in the parables of the Master, it is truly amazing to read the ponderous and imposing treatises of perplexed theologians who seek to emphasize the Divine Sonship of Jesus. Of course, this was the burden of Paul's indoctrination.

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said, is a distinct utterance of the sacramental or mystery religions. It was an especial term applied to Mithra, the Sun god. It is known that Paul frequently uses this appellation, as in I Cor. ii: 8. But James does not unequivocably say "the Lord of Glory." This is a substitution by the translators. James simply says "of Glory." It is indeed a question whether the term "of Glory" qualifies the expression "Our Lord Jesus Christ," which immediately precedes, or the phrase "hold not the faith." That is, the Greek so reads that grammatically it may be translated "Hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, our faith of Glory." There have been commentators who have insisted on this translation (see Bloomfield's Greek Testament with English Notes *in loc*). Apparently the accepted translators have been influenced by Paul's expression, "The Lord of Glory," which he states without equivocation, and seeing the expression in James, "*tης doxis*" (of glory) they thought James meant to use the term "Our Lord of Glory" as Paul does.

The new idea which Paul introduced, and no trace of which can be discovered in the original Gospel of Mark (supposedly the first to have been published) namely that God came down to earth in the form of a human being to suffer and die for humanity, is only gradually developed in the later Gospels. Paul had announced [26] "God hath spoken unto us by His Son, . . . being the brightness of His glory and express image of His person." Yet, in Mark, Jesus arises from the people, a human being, but little complexioned with indications of divinity. In Matthew, however, the divine characteristics and supernatural origin are emphatically set forth, while in Luke they become prominent and in John reach the heights of exaltation, who exclaims: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son . . . He sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world." If God did send His Son, who was "the express image of His person," of course that Son must so enter the world that no element of sinfulness shall attach to the manner of His earthly generation. Hence came the stories in Matthew and Luke where the human father of the Holy Child is restrained from the exercise of His procreative prerogative and the mother only through the grace of an intervening angel is permitted to be the exclusive agency in the generation of the Sacred Offspring.

But why the Son of God should be considered void of "the sin of the flesh" when conceived in the womb of his human mother without human masculine co-operation is, indeed, difficult to understand. Catholic theologians sought to escape this logical embarrassment by attributing a perpetual virginity to the mother of Jesus thus maintaining her body pure and unsullied. But this merely confuses the issue and leaves the problem unsolved. The metaphysical invention is altogether so illogical that one marvels at the learned brains which have wasted their native energy in useless speculation concerning it.

For surely if the Supreme, Omnipotent Being of the uni-

[26] Hebrews i: 1–3.

verse determined upon sending "the express image of His person" down to the earth in a body absolutely void of "the sinfulness of the flesh," he could have devised a method far more rational and consistent than that imputed to Him in the writings of the New Testament.

He might easily have avoided both Mary and Joseph, as direct agents in the procreation of the Divine One, by merely moulding the elements of the ether into the lovely form of a new-made baby and floating it gracefully from the clouds into the unexpectant lap of her who was the most highly favored and blessed among women. Such a dignified procedure would, in truth, have been no more amazing or a more serious strain on that age's credulity than the inconsistent "miracle" narrated in the Gospel novels. Indeed, that age was quite prepared for such an extraordinary exhibition of divine power; for it is evident, from the stories about the infancy of the Savior, recited in the apochryphal gospels, that no possible invention could be so extravagant as not to be acceptable to the imagination of the multitude. For in those books we read that while the Savior was still an infant and in His cradle He delivered long and weighty homilies to devoted hearers and otherwise displayed precocious wisdom and supernatural capacity.

If the people of that period could without revulsion or the least sense of nausea, imbibe such intellectual perversions and distorted imaginings as are discovered in the apochryphal gospels, they would surely not have been too incredulous of the sudden appearance of God Himself within the domestic circle of Mary and Joseph in the shape of a new born babe, pleading with them to assume the office of foster parents in order that He might set out upon His altruistic mission.

If the credulous subjects of the divine will, to whom such a revelation might have been presented, were disposed to reason, they would not fail to find plausible postulates with which to sustain their faith. For God is the creator of the world; with Him all things are possible. He is both creator and pro-

creator. If He could by the word of His mouth mould inert clay into a human form, how much more certainly could He mould a human form out of primal ethereal elements. If He could breathe the breath of life into the nostrils of an image of clay, how much more surely could He endow an ethereal image, transmuted into flesh and blood, with the "brightness of His glory"!

He who could say to the elements "Let light be" and instant splendor illuminated the heavens and the earth which was primordially "without form and void," could as well command the ether to generate the multicellular units of a human body and reveal to unexpectant parents "the only begotten of the Father."

It goes without saying that if such a miracle were recorded in Holy Writ, it would be accepted as historically genuine as that of the parthenogenetic generation of the Babe of Bethlehem.

VIII

But let us return to the study of Luke's Gospel. That we may see how it was an ingenious propaganda of Paul's indoctrination derived from mystical pagan sources, let us investigate the clever parable of the Prodigal Son, presented alone by the author of the Gospel according to Luke. To begin with, it is entirely void of ethical value, if, indeed, it does not devaluate the noblest ethics. It condones injustice and honors a feeble philanderer. However, as we have intimated, it was apparently written for a purpose and that purpose is easily discerned: namely, to sustain Paul's revolutionary inoculation of a pagan conception into Jewish tradition.

Recalling that Luke writes to establish the authority of a Judeo-Gentile deity, whose purpose was to redeem not only the chosen people but also the uncircumcised heathen, by an oblation of human blood, a thing deftly avoided in the inci-

dent of Isaac's commanded sacrifice, the meaning of the parable becomes clear, and the unethical balance, established between the dutiful son who remained at home and the wanderer who preferred to sow his wild oats among the gentiles and yet was favored with the fatted calf, is accounted for.

The dutiful son is of course the "just Jew" who fulfilled all the demands of the law, but mistakenly conceived that he was entitled to God's blessing because of this. He believed that the ceremonial code was complete and required no revision, as it was a direct deliverance from on high. Whatever blessings that might accrue to him must be among his own people. To go off after other gods or to mingle with the heathen was the capital crime. His savior is Israel; he is the ward of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

But the prodigal son defies the ancient tradition. He tires of Jehovah and tries other gods. He despises his own household and seeks the houses of the uncircumcised and degenerate heathen. True he falls into a trap; he goes to the dogs, eats with swine and sleeps in dung. Nevertheless, he touched the outer world; he sensed and understood the psychology of the gentiles. Therefore his spirit had been broadened; he had luxuriated in freedom from the repressions of ceremonial restrictions. He had indeed built a bridge between the Jew and the pagan; between the ceremonialist and the cosmopolite. Now, be it observed, the dutiful son represents Jesus the Nazarene, the Redeemer who operates only through the restrictive laws of the temple, who is "sent alone to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

But the prodigal son represents the Christ Jesus of Paul; the Jesus who has become the cosmopolitan Redeemer; the despiser of tradition and the provincial legalists. Like the unfortunate prodigal who ate with swine, He is despised of men and is a man of sorrow. Yet, also, like the prodigal son, in spite of persecution and suffering, He returns to His own household to enlighten it and lift its narrow walls and low

ceiling that the light of the outer world may penetrate. Therefore the fatted calf and the feast of rejoicing: therefore the words of the exultant father to the dutiful boy: "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that is mine is thine. But it was meet to make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

Peter's Jewish Savior (the Messiah who came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel) is dethroned; Paul's Gentile Savior, the "Light of the World," who came to save both Jews and pagans, is jubilantly enthroned!

The dutiful son is the Jesus who yielded to the authority of the law; who said: "not one jot or tittle of it shall pass away"; who entered the temple and read from traditional Scripture. But the prodigal is the Jesus who mingled freely with the unregenerate, who supped with "publicans and sinners," who befriended harlots and Magdalens; who braved the scorn and derision of the legalists by venturing to enter the synagogue and defying them to their teeth.

"Can ye make the sons of the bridechamber fast when the bridegroom is with them?" The good son is the Jesus discerned in the traces of the earliest tradition in Matthew and Mark. The prodigal son is the Jesus of Luke and Paul.

Once we detect this key we wonder no longer why this beautiful and universally engaging parable was recorded alone among the Synoptists, by Luke.

IX

Once more; let us analyze the parable of the lost sheep. Let us contrast the manifest purpose here of the Matthewan Gospel and the Lukan Gospel. The incidents of the parable are the same in each: the emphasis is placed on the joy of finding the sheep which had gone astray to the neglect of the ninety and nine which are safe in the wilderness. But observe: the deductions or inferences drawn from the incidents are char-

acteristically divergent in the two narratives. Matthew's insistence is: "I say unto you he rejoices more over that sheep than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of our Father in heaven that one of these little ones shall perish." But Luke's deduction is: "Likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance."

Matthew's appeal is for "these little ones" whom the Father in heaven wills shall not be lost. But these "little ones" are the Jews "who believe in me," for Jesus is talking alone to the Jews who had become His disciples. In Luke the emphasis is on "one sinner that repenteth," whoever he be, by implication Jew or gentile, publican or temple-worshipper, worldling or Pharisee.

Also let us notice that while Matthew's Jesus animadverts sympathetically on "these little ones" (the exclusive lost sheep of the house of Israel to whom alone He has been sent), Luke's Jesus animadverts sarcastically on "the just ones" (the sticklers for legalistic righteousness), "who need no repentance!" This irony of the universal Savior of Luke has, I think, been generally overlooked by the learned commentators. And it is also noticeable that no similar irony against the gentiles has anywhere been indicated in the Lukan gospel.

To show still further the emphatic variance between the propaganda of Matthew and Luke, the one looking exclusively to the conversion of the Jews, the other indicating the universality of the gospel,[27] observe the specific instruction given the disciples when Jesus sends them out on their missionary labors: "Go not into the way of the gentiles; and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But in Luke,[28] when these chosen twelve disciples are sent forth on their mission, no such instruction to

[27] Matt. x: 5.
[28] Lk. vi: 12–17 and ix: 1.

avoid the gentiles is found. Nor do we find the restrictive injunction given to the seventy.[29] A stronger intimation could scarcely be indicated of the direct effort of Luke to proclaim the Paulinian doctrine: namely, that Jesus came not alone to the house of Israel but to all mankind. In Matthew Jesus is still the Nazarene, the provincial Jew. In Luke Jesus is the cosmopolitan Christ, the new Jesus that Paul foisted on the early disciples.

There is another incident in Luke which further illustrates the phase of Paulinian propaganda that pervades this gospel. In chapter xvii: 11–19 we have the story of the ten lepers whom Jesus met when He entered the region of Samaria. He cleansed them all but only one came back to do Him honor. That one was an alien, a Samaritan, concerning whom, according to Matthew's Gospel Jesus had commanded His disciples never to have any association. They were commanded, He says, not to heal or save them. But in the narrative of Luke he has Jesus bestow His blessing without hesitancy (unlike the incident of the Syrophoenician woman spoken of in Matthew). He says: "Were there none found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger? Arise and go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole."

Matthew does not speak of this incident. But Luke emphasizes that the stranger was a Samaritan to whom the favor of salvation is granted as freely as to any of "the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Then, again, there is the incident of the Grecian or Syrophoenician woman whose story is found in Matthew. What does Jesus say to her? "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it unto dogs." She does not belong to "the house of Israel": therefore the Matthew Jesus forces her to be reduced to the humiliation of a dog before she is fit to receive His blessing.

The Matthew Jesus proves himself subservient to the an-

[29] Luke x: 1–12.

cient custom of the Jew in looking down on "goyim" as swine. This narrative (doubtless a relic of the early traditions concerning the Nazarene) is suggestively omitted from the Gospel of Luke, the author apparently being unwilling to portray his Jesus as unsympathetic with non-Judaic races. His insistence is that "not one sinner that repenteth" but shall be saved, be that sinner by implication a Syrophoenician woman or a begging Lazarus.

Thus we may justly and logically conclude that the Matthewan and perhaps the Markan Jesus are not psychologically identical with the Jesus of Luke, for each, it would appear, is portrayed in such a manner as to symbolize certain propaganda, the one arising from "the congregation at Jerusalem" whose constituents were all converted Jews or Nazarenes, the other emanating as we shall shortly indicate from the monastic caves of Egypt or the metaphysical halls of Alexandria, whose appeal is not exclusively to the Hebraic race but to all members of the human family.

X

As a possible discovery of the profane sources from which the Gospels, especially the Gospel of Luke, may have been derived, a slight intimation may be found in Luke's narrative of the bewildered parents of Jesus who, seeking the lost boy when twelve years of age, discovered Him, to their great relief, in the temple teaching the Rabbis. Why did Luke alone of the Synoptists mention this incident? Did Luke, who must have written at least a half century after the death of Jesus, and probably much later, hear it from those who from the beginning had associated with those who were "eye witnesses," or did he pick it up as a floating rumor, or possibly invent it himself?

No positive answer, of course, can be given to these questions. Nevertheless, curiously enough we find in the autobi-

ography of Flavius Josephus [30] a statement about himself at the period of puberty which closely resembles Luke's report of the twelve-year-old "Redeemer" teaching erudite masters of the law its occult meaning. Says the celebrated Jewish historian: "When I was a child about fourteen years of age I was commended by all for the love I had for learning, on which account the High Priests and the principal men of the city came to me in order to know my opinion regarding the accurate understanding of points of the law." [31]

Of course, this may be a simple coincidence quite conspicuous in the two lives. Nevertheless, whoever wrote the Gospel according to St. Luke must have been a contemporary of Josephus who lived between 25 and 95 A. D., or if not a contemporary, he must have lived subsequent to Josephus's time. The works of this author were very celebrated and it would not be at all unlikely that a copy of the historian's autobiography had been perused by the anonymous writer who composed Luke's Gospel.

Now, considering the immense number of legendary performances attributed to the childhood and youth of Jesus, noticeably those recorded in the apochryphal gospels, which were at the time accepted as credible along with those alone finally admitted into the canon, the appropriation of an innocuous saga from Josephus as a foundation for an incident in the life of Jesus (especially one so harmless as the temple experience) does not seem to be unwarranted or improbable. True, Josephus may have been a bit egocentric, and a subconscious wish may have been father to the thought of his own importance, when he acknowledged the extraordinary wisdom of his youthful mind; nevertheless if such an alleged fact could be unoffensively accepted as true in the career of so great a figure of profane history, would not the unlettered

[30] "So far as Luke is concerned his acquaintance with the *Antiquities* of Josephus remains a fact" (N. Schmidts, *The Prophet of Nazareth*, p. 232).

[31] *Vita* II; also *Jewish Enc.*, art. *Mitzwah.*

multitude believe it far more probable (perhaps to be expected) if related of the Son of Man who descended from heaven to redeem unregenerate humanity?

The Fathers attempted to sift from the canonical Gospels such of the apochryphal "miracles" as were even then a too dangerous strain on the credulity of the age; but surely they need have little hesitancy in incorporating in the Gospel history of Jesus a superhuman qualification no more startling than the one Josephus naïvely attributes to himself!

XI

If among the many narratives to which Luke refers in his preamble which had been published in his time were those which are now classified as apochryphal,[32] then we may discover a possible key which unlocks the mystery of how Luke came to report in his gospel details throughout the life of the Messianic Hero which were left unrecorded by Matthew and Mark.

The stories relative to the birth and infancy of the Divine Child incorporated in our current Gospels are a sufficient test for the credulity of rational folk; and they indeed force us to marvel that intelligent people of any age should have supinely accepted them as valid history; but those which were left intact in the apochryphal writings of that age divulge to us

[32] "No period in the history of the world ever produced so many spurious works as the first two or three centuries of our era. The name of every apostle, or Christian teacher, not excepting that of the Master Himself, was freely attached to every description of religious forgery. False gospels, epistles, acts, martyrologies, were unscrupulously circulated, and such pious falsification was not even intended or regarded as a crime, but perpetrated for the sake of edification. It was only slowly, and after some centuries, that many of these works, once regarded with pious veneration, were excluded from the canon; and that genuine works shared their fate, whilst spurious ones usurped their places, is one of the surest results of criticism. The fathers omitted to enquire critically when such investigation might have been of value and mere tradition was sedulously accepted and transmitted of no critical value." (*Supernatural Religion*, Vol. I. p. 460, Longmans, Green, fifth edition, 1875.)

from what monstrosities we have been saved, notwithstanding for several centuries the established Church reveled in them as truthful and authentic.

The Protevangelion, for instance, informs us that when Mary was about to be delivered and Joseph went in search of a midwife, he looked into the air and saw the clouds stand still and show astonishment; he saw the workingmen sitting at a table with food in their hands still and motionless as statues; he found sheep which had been dispersed suddenly pause and the shepherd who had lifted his hand to smite them paralyzed, with his hand "continuing up"; when Mary fled from Herod with the Infant in her arms, the writer informs us "that a mountain miraculously divided and received them."

In the gospel of "The Infancy" we learn that when Jesus was yet a babe in the cradle He revealed to Mary and Joseph that he was the true Son of God; that directly the babe was delivered, the nurse who was an invalid, by merely touching the new born baby was instantly cured of her disease; that the foreskin of the babe and the navel string were preserved in a box of spikenard through which many miracles were accomplished; that one of the baby's swaddling cloths, which Mary gave to one of the visiting Wise Men, when thrown into the fire refused to burn; that when Mary and Joseph ran away from Herod into Egypt with the Holy Child a great Egyptian idol spoke aloud and told the astonished multitude that "the unknown god is come hither, who is truly the Son of God"; that a band of robbers fled in terror hearing the noise of the approach of the new born "king"; that the bath water in which the child was laved cured a leprous woman; that a young man who had been bewitched and turned into a mule was miraculously restored to a normal human being when they put the Baby on its back; that the mud birds which Jesus moulded when playing with children flew away like real birds and ate and drank while the mud birds the others made remained inert; that the boy when grown older widened and

contracted gates, milk pails, sieves and boxes (which his father Joseph had fumbled in making) by merely touching them; and a hundred more such unbelievable and childish stories which at the time were accepted as solemn facts by the faithful founders of the religion which, despite such revolting absurdities, succeeded in conquering vast segments of cultured humanity, dominant thrones and multitudinous nations.

How easy must it have been then, in such an atmosphere of pristine credulity and mental paralysis, to shape any sort of character for Jesus that a self-appointed biographer chose to conjure from rambling rumor or from the depths of his imagination. Each of those writers "took it in hand" to write "of those matters delivered unto them by those who from the beginning were eye-witnesses," according to St. Luke; by which euphemism we are probably authorized to conclude that the various portraitures of the mythical hero, were shaped and reshaped, during a period of some two hundred years, according to the demand of each successive epoch, accommodated to the idiosyncratic fancy of the individual biographer, or the demands of the age.

CHAPTER V

CONTRADICTORY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JESUS OF THE SYNOPTICS

RECAPITULATION OF PRECEDING STUDIES

The search for distinguishing characteristics of Jesus in the different gospels evincing the psychological origin of the alleged biographies is a most interesting and intriguing study.

These narratives have for so many centuries been read sympathetically and with such slight critical discrimination by the average reader and even by people of general culture, that when an intensive examination of them is made by the serious student he is quite overcome with strange discoveries. They have so long been accepted as actual biographical sketches of a genuine historic personage, and He the supreme personage of all time, one hesitates at the logical deduction which casts doubt on their accuracy, if not, indeed, on their genuineness and originality.

If compared with one another they conflict in many instances; frequently they conflict in such a manner as to make reconciliation impossible. Thus far we have observed that the Jesus whose characteristics are described by Matthew is in many respects distinguishable in essential elements from that of Mark, while both in turn exhibit characteristics inconsistent with the Jesus described by Luke.

Of course we are not unacquainted with the customary explanation: namely, that the different writers study their subject from different angles and thus complement each other

in spite of the divergent qualities they attribute to their hero. If this were the entire truth then a critical examination would yield but slight results. While, therefore, we must admit that the biography of any individual, when studied from different angles may reveal seemingly inconsistent characteristics, yet when those characteristics prove to be inconsistent with the psychology of the individual investigated, we must conclude that the so-called biographies were either intentionally untruthful or that the subject of the biography was purely fictitious.

When the character described proves to be inconsistent with itself in many essential qualities it argues that the elements of the biography have been gathered from unreliable sources.

A startling psychological inconsistency in the nature of Jesus is shown, for instance, in Mark's and Matthew's description of the injunction given to the newly selected disciples who were commissioned to go abroad and preach His gospel.[1]

In Mark we have the bare statement, "Wheresoever ye enter into a house there abide till ye depart in peace. And whatsoever place shall not receive you, and they hear you not, . . . shake off the dust that is under your feet for a testimony unto them." Here evidently the attitude to be assumed by the disciples toward those heedless of their invitation is one of quiet rebuke, void of virulence or anger; to disclaim solemnly all intercourse or dealings with such persons or localities. But when Matthew[2] describes the same situation he fills the mouth of Jesus with cursings and blistering condemnation. He adds the terrible words: "Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city" that will not receive them. Again, Mark makes Jesus say, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man shall also be ashamed of when he cometh in

[1] Mark. vi: 10, 11.
[2] Matt. x: 10–15.

glory." But for these insinuating words Matthew substitutes terms of bitterness: "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven; think not I come to send peace on earth; I come not to send peace but a sword; for I come to set a man at variance against his father, . . . he that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me," etc.

Yet, in contrast to this irate and denunciatory Jesus Matthew had already said of him: "He shall not strive nor cry aloud, nor shall any one hear his voice in the streets, a bruised reed shall he not break."

On the one hand Jesus is thus represented as meek and lowly, a lover of peace, void of vengeful spirit or martial attitude. When Peter cuts off the ear of one who offended the Master, He rebukes him and declares that he who takes the sword shall perish by it. On the other hand, elsewhere the Master recites, without apparent regret, the frightful horrors that are to take place in the world because of His mission and the victories that shall come alone through bloodshed and suffering: Those days shall be tribulation, such as there hath not been the like from the beginning of creation, . . . and never shall be. "Brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the father his child: and children shall rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death." And all these horrors shall come to pass because "the gospel must be first preached unto all the nations."

On the one hand He enjoins His disciples and others to come unto Him, for His yoke is easy and His burden is light and He is meek and lowly of heart; yet on the other hand He foretells all the unnamable tortures through which they shall pass because of their espousal of His cause. "Take heed to yourselves; for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in their synagogues shall ye be beaten; and before kings and governors shall ye stand for my sake; . . . let them that are in Judea flee unto the mountains; let him that is in the field

not return back to take his cloke. Woe to them that are with child," etc.

Surely a yoke so fraught with prophetic horror could neither be light nor easy to endure.

Many such inconsistencies can be pointed out in the narratives, indicating that the authors merely gathered legends or copied from former documents, regardless of what possible discrepancies might be involved.

Matthew, for instance, informs us that the last time the disciples saw Jesus was when they met Him at an appointed mountain where He enjoined them to go into all the world and preach His gospel. But Luke says that while He was preaching, He led the disciples from Jerusalem to the town of Bethany (not to a mountain) "and it came to pass while he blessed them he parted from them and was carried up into heaven."

These accounts fail to agree in detail, and the sublime climax to the scene which Luke describes is wholly ignored by Matthew, a thing quite impossible if the ascension had really been enacted. The incident would have been altogether too important and amazing for any of the narrators to have passed it by; nor could it have been reported in the supposed common document from which critics assume the Gospels were composed; for if such a record had been discovered of an event so stupendous, certainly it would not have been left for the last of the Synoptists alone to repeat it.

At the trial scene similar inconsistencies are conspicuous. To begin with we find Jesus contradicting Himself. In Matthew he is made to say to his accusers:[3] "Are ye come out as against a robber with swords and staves to seize me? I sat daily in the temple teaching, and ye took me not." John adds to this statement:[4] "I have spoken openly to the world, . . . in secret I spake nothing."

[3] Matt. xxvi: 55.
[4] Jno. xviii: 20.

But long before the trial Jesus had assured His diciples that he was giving them the esoteric meaning of His allegorical parables. He explained to them that there was one meaning for them and another for the world outside. "All these things spake Jesus in parables unto the multitudes; and without a parable spake he nothing unto them. . . . Then he left the multitudes and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Explain unto us the parable." [5]

What was explained in secret to His disciples was the essence of His doctrine, its substance; what was given in parables was its shadow. Therefore His statement to the council that He never spake anything in secret is of course a contradiction. Emphatically does He declare to His disciples when they ask why He speaks to the multitude in parables, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." [6]

Jesus is thus made to appear inconsistent with Himself. Again when the impatient Peter confidentially approaches Him and asks: "Lo, we have left all and followed thee; what then shall we have?" Jesus replies: "In the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." [7] But in the very next chapter of this same Gospel, when the mother of the sons of Zebedee begs that her two sons may sit with Him in his kingdom on the right and left of His throne, He looks amazed and answers: "Ye know not what ye ask; . . . to sit on my right hand and on my left hand, is not mine to give—but it is for them for whom it has been prepared of my Father." [8]

Certainly if He cannot make it possible for the two sons of Zebedee to sit beside Him on His throne, much less is it in His

[5] Matt. xiii: 34, 36.
[6] Matt. xiii: 11.
[7] Matt. xix: 28.
[8] Matt. xx: 22–23.

power to place all the apostles on twelve thrones to judge the tribes of Israel.

He enjoins against judging one's neighbor lest one be judged likewise, and assures Peter that he shall not forgive only seven times but seventy times seven; nevertheless He promptly reveals His own unforgiving spirit when called upon to judge the fate of those who oppose His teaching: "Whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it were better for him if a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depths of the sea." [9]

A severer judgment could scarcely be announced and that, too, not because of the base character or sinfulness of the heart of the condemned, but solely because he exercised the instinctive privilege of a human being to disagree with Jesus and turn a blind believer away from Him by the exercise of reason. On such words as these which the Gospels put into the mouth of Jesus have heretics been judged, condemned, hanged and sawn asunder. Yet He is elsewhere represented as a man of peace who would not so much as "quench the smoking flax."

These inconsistencies in the teachings of the same individual can be reconciled only by the partisan dogmatist. A mass of contradictions and discrepancies exist in these writings which would be too tedious to indicate to the reader at present. But enough have been shown to expose their unreconcilability.

II

The Jesus referred to in the Synoptic Gospels is altogether too diverse and inconsistent to be merged into a single, consistent individual.

Mark's Jesus is merely another Old Testament prophet, engaged in doing good, healing the sick, comforting the disconsolate, etc. Being possessed of certain magnetic powers the

[9] Matt. xviii: 6.

masses regard His accomplishments as "miracles." But in Mark the impression does not seem to be given that the so-called miracles are regarded as attestations of divine sanction for the doctrines He delivers. They are still kept within the old Deuteronomic purview. "If a prophet arise among you and giveth a sign or a wonder and the sign or wonder come to pass, but he desires to lead you into idolatry thou shalt not hearken unto that prophet, for the Lord your God trieth you whether you really love the Lord your God." [10]

Thus, the sign or wonder, in the ancient tradition, held no efficacy whatsoever in determining the truthfulness or untruthfulness of a doctrine. And that the writer of Mark was possessed of this same conviction seems to be indicated in the incident of John, while in prison, sending to Jesus to learn the nature and source of His authority. It is noticeable that in both Matthew [11] and Luke [12] Jesus is represented in His answer to John as indicating that His miracles are attestations of His authority, but in Mark the entire incident is omitted. Apparently Mark clings to the Jewish tradition that miracles can prove nothing concerning the verity or authority of a religious doctrine.

Mark suffers his hero to rise but little above the plane of an old time Hebrew prophet. When, for instance, Peter cries out "Thou art the Christ," Jesus, in Mark's [13] account, instantly silences him; but when Matthew [14] refers to the incident, he makes his Jesus glory in Peter's intuition and bestows on him the highest praise because of it.

Mark, again, refers only by way of a hint to the promised resurrection, as I have already shown, but Matthew paints a positive and detailed scene concerning whose actual occurrence he attempts to leave no doubt.

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[10] Deut. xiii: 1–4.
[11] Matt. xi: 2–6.
[12] Luke vii: 18 et seq.
[13] Mark viii: 29–30.
[14] Matt. xvi: 16–20.

Manifestly, Mark's Jesus is merely another Old Testament prophet, of a less heroic type, perhaps, than Isaiah, and with less of the supernatural halo than Elisha, though somewhat similar in miraculous achievements to Elijah. The "signs and wonders" he accomplishes are rather quiet and unsensational. But Matthew's Jesus, while still complexioned with Jewish elements, is overcast with a more supernatural atmosphere, ascending, indeed, to the proportions of a demigod, in contrast to the simple humanness of the Markan Jesus. The latter ever seeks to minimize the vague intuitions of the disciples that He may be a super-human being, while Matthew's Jesus accepts the title, apparently, and without rebuke; as when Peter tries to walk to Him over the water at sea and Jesus saves him and stills the wind, "they that were in the ship worshipped him, saying, 'Of a truth thou art the Son of God.' "[15] This incident also is wholly omitted from Mark's Gospel.

Moreover, and that which distinctly characterizes the Markan Jesus as not of supernatural origin or the magician who overpowers death, He is not represented as being begotten by the Holy Ghost and born of a virgin, in contrast to Matthew's Jesus who is parthenogenetically generated; nor is it attested of Him that He actually rose from the grave (as Matthew emphatically narrates), howbeit, he admits that there was a rumor—a bare hint of it, coming from the lips of gossipy women.

When, again, we study the Jesus of Luke, as we have shown, we discover one who has sloughed the distinguishing elements of the Markan and Matthewan Jesus, and looms rather a sympathetic philosopher, mid-way between the Old Testament prophets and the academicians of Grecian groves.

Thus, for instance, Matthew's Jesus, the austere semi-supernatural interpreter of Jewish doctrines, on beholding the fruitless fig tree, instantly curses and destroys it.[16] But on a

[15] Matt. xiv: 29–33.
[16] Matt. xxi: 19.

similar occasion Luke [17] reveals the reserved and philosophical attitude of his hero. For, in this parable, though the tree had borne no fruit for a period of three years, nevertheless Jesus (represented in "the dresser of the vineyard") insists that it must not be instantly cut down but that it shall be dug around and dunged for yet another year; if then perchance it bear fruit, it is well; but if not, then it will be time enough to cut it down.

Again, Matthew's Jesus recites the parable of the wedding feast, to which many were invited and nervously excused themselves for various reasons. But suddenly a stranger wanders in void of the wedding raiment. The master of the feast (representing Jesus) cries out excitedly: "Carry him away and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." In this incident Jesus is represented as the master of ceremonies at a Jewish wedding; only Jews (disciples of Jesus, who had come over from Judaism) were permitted to participate. Therefore the excitement and cursing of the master when he sees a stranger (an alien—one not a Jew) enter in.[18]

But when Luke narrates a similar parable (xiv: 15–24) he omits the incident of the uninvited guest; on the contrary he has the master send out his servants to scour "the highways and the hedges and constrain them to come in that my house may be filled. . . . None of those men which were bidden (the Jews who refused Christ's invitation) shall taste of my supper." Luke's Jesus contemplates the presence of the gentiles and orders them to be found in the city's purlieus. He knows nothing of a "stranger" who comes without wedding garment. But Matthew's Jesus is horrified at the uninvited guest who sought to become a beneficiary of his favors (merely because he is without the "wedding garment"—that is, outside the ranks of Jewry)—even though he had sent his serv-

[17] Luke xiii: 6–10.
[18] Matt. xxii.

ants into the highways to gather as many as they could find. Evidently Matthew's Jesus meant that His servants should find only Jewish prospects ("lost sheep of the house of Israel") in the highways, but Luke's Jesus welcomes all whoever they may be, whencesoever they may come.

Many more similar inconsistencies [19] might be indicated between the Jesus of Matthew and the Jesus of Luke, in addition to those already enumerated in previous chapters, but sufficient have been presented for the present.

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[19] "If none of the Gospels . . . were written by Apostles and eye witnesses, or existed at all before some sixty years or more had passed since the death of Jesus, to what extent can such accounts be regarded trustworthy? . . . Can the historic figure be at all discerned through the veil of myth and legend? . . . Is it possible to prove even the historic existence of the Teacher of Nazareth?" (Schmidt's *Prophet of Nazareth*, p. 233.) Schmidt, however, confesses his conviction "that Jesus of Nazareth actually existed, that some of the events of His life may be known to us, that some of His words may be recovered," etc. But palpably such a Jesus of Nazareth is not the person whose portrait is drawn in such detail for us in the Gospels.

CHAPTER VI

ORIGIN AND NATURE OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

STARTLING CONTRAST BETWEEN JOHN'S JESUS AND JESUS OF THE SYNOPTICS—INFLUENCE OF NEOPLATONISM AND PHILONIAN PHILOSOPHY—MITHRAIC FEATURES IN JOHN'S ACCOUNT OF THE LAST SUPPER—PAGAN INFILTRATION IN JOHN'S GOSPEL—WHY THE FOURTH GOSPEL WAS WRITTEN

When we approach the fourth biography of Jesus our surprise mounts to its climax. For if John wrote the life of the same Jesus whose biography the Synoptists themselves, howbeit inconsistently, composed, then it would be possible to write the life of Napoleon in the terms applicable to George Washington, or of Alexander the Great in terms descriptive of Lincoln.

The Jewish mendicant prophet of Mark, the austere, relentless Hebraic reformer of Matthew (embossed on a supernatural background), the cosmopolitan and broad humanitarian of Luke, void of Jewish legalism, seeking Gentile recognition and conniving at Gentile mythology, are suddenly dissolved in the alembic of neoplatonic metaphysics and transmuted into a supermundane, deific character by St. John, who boldly proclaims in his preamble: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

At once we are arrested by the new term—"THE WORD." Here is an appellation nowhere else found in Jewish or Jesuan Scripture. It is foreign to the vernacular of Palestine. Whence came it?

It emits the odor of Egypt—the land of mystics and meta-

physicians. It smells of the musty halls of Alexandria—fountain-head of neoplatonic philosophy!

True, one Jew, and he an Alexandrian, Philo,[1] does, indeed, forestall John's use of the cryptic term. However, he apparently never thought of applying it to Jesus whom he had never seen nor heard, notwithstanding He was a contemporary of his and even visited Jerusalem at the very period during which Jesus is alleged to have appeared.

Why, then, did John so abruptly introduce the Galilean by a term wholly foreign to the religion of Judea, yet so well known in the realms of pagan philosophy? Why, in short, did this supposed ignorant fisherman of Palestine discourse like an Egyptian Magus or an Alexandrian metaphysician rather than like a Hebrew in portraying the character of his hero? Could he have had in mind the same humble Nazarene, the meek and lowly prophet of Nazareth, or the fiery agitator feared by Herod, whom the Synoptists had clothed with human qualities, though somewhat haloed by a supernatural nimbus; or was he rather contemplating some pagan deity whom he sought to describe in semi-Hebraic phraseology?

When John wrote his Gospel it is quite apparent his appeal was not a half disguised tract for unconverted Jews far from the narrow confines of Palestine, but a bold, fervent propaganda intended almost exclusively for the pagan alien, the Greek, the gentile, the "barbarian." He has widened his horizon far beyond that even of Luke or Paul, the latter still finding himself compelled to offer the gospel "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."[2] But John's story scarcely contemplates the susceptibility of the Hebrew populace, for it is couched almost wholly in terms of pagan philosophy.

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[1] "The fourth Evangelist was intimately acquainted with Philonic speculation. The Alexandrian philosopher furnished him not only with ideas but also with characteristic phraseology. Without Philo his Gospel could never have been written" (Schmidt's *The Prophet of Nazareth*, p. 169).

[2] Rom. i: 16.

John's Jesus is far afield from the "meek and lowly" Prophet of Palestine who clothed His thoughts in simple parables and homely symbols. The Jesus of the Synoptists was a human friend, healing, comforting, visioning the horizon of earthly needs. But John's Jesus "dwells in the bosom of the Father whom the only begotten Son hath seen"; He is the "light that shineth in darkness—born not of flesh, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

John's Jesus is not content, unlike the Synoptists' Jesus, to ordain the Eucharist as an institution appropriated from Jewish usage, but insists on describing this sacrament almost in pagan terms: Jesus in the earlier Gospels offers the bread and cup of wine as symbols of His body and blood, and enjoins His disciples to eat and drink them "in remembrance of me." But John's interpretation, which he puts in the mouth of Jesus, is far more mythological: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves; for my flesh is true meat, indeed, and my blood is true drink, indeed." [3]

This language is so reminiscent of the mystical sacrament of the pagans that its differentiation can scarcely be discerned. The Fathers of the Church were quite aware of the close resemblance between the Eucharist of the Christians and that of the pagans and Justin Martyr felt himself called upon to apologize for the coincidence and explain the different sources from which they derived.

After describing the institution of the Lord's Supper, as narrated in the Gospels, Justin Martyr goes on to say: "Which the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries of Mithra, commanding the same thing to be done. For, that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated, ye either know or can learn." In the same tenor Tertullian complains that "the devil has gone about to apply to the worship of idols *the very*

[3] John vi: 53.

things in which consist the administrations of Christ's sacraments. [4]

The statement of Justin Martyr that in the Mithraic rites a cup of water was used as a symbol of "life," instead of wine as in the Christian Sacrament, is itself a curious comment on the fact that the first Christians (the Ebionites—strictly Jewish Christians) also used water instead of wine.

Whoever wrote the Gospel of John was well acquainted with the esoteric meaning of the pagan rite, yet diplomatically merged it with the celebration of the Jewish pascal lamb, that the merging of Jew and gentile in the new cult might be justified. The pascal lamb was actually eaten in the Jewish celebration, and its blood may have originally been drank and afterwards substituted by wine. But whatever Jewish relic lingers in the Christian celebration of the Eucharist its pagan origination or immediate connection cannot be doubted. "Everything goes to show not only that the Lamb in the early Christian cultus was a God-symbol from remote antiquity, but that it was regarded in exactly the same way as the symbolical lamb in the Mithraic cult." [5]

When John earnestly emphasizes that by eating the bread and drinking the blood it is the eating and drinking of the God Jesus, he simply carries over into the Christian environment a universal pagan custom, which constituted one of the profoundest elements of mystery in the ancient religions. He is not satisfied that the rite shall be celebrated as "a remembrance" of Jesus, as the Synoptists insist, but it must be such a remembrance of Jesus as God as shall involve the eating of His very body and the drinking of His actual blood. This is the very essence of the ethnic mystery religions, already dimly foreshadowed in ancient Jewish usages, when they "went out after idols and the food of devils."

An intimation of the elements employed in the Christian

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[4] Robertson's *Pagan Christs*, 307, 308.
[5] Robertson.

Lord's Supper may be seen as already anticipated in the Levitical code.[6]

Here it is enjoined that when the promised land is reached the people shall sacrifice to Jehovah, through the office of the priest, a sheaf of the first fruits and a he-lamb unblemished. The drink offering is to be wine, and no bread must be eaten till the oblation of wine is brought to the Lord.

Here we see the blood of the lamb already regarded as a mystical symbol, finally incorporated in the Christian system, as the blood of Christ, and the bread and the wine, as essentials of the sacrament the Jews must forever commemorate. John combines or merges this vague symbolization of Jewish usage with the doctrine that then prevailed throughout the ethnic religions of the pagan world, transforming the bread into the actual body of the Christ, as in the Mithraic sacrament, and the wine into the true blood of the Lord. "If ye eat not the body of the Lord and drink not his blood, ye shall surely not have life in yourselves."

In the Synoptists the first communion was merely a "remembrance" service; in the fourth Gospel it becomes a mystical rite; the synoptic communion connoted a Jewish symbolism—a rite to commemorate and honor God; but the communion service of the fourth Gospel markedly connotes the symbolism of pagan indoctrination, which enjoined the actual eating of the god. The lamb eaten at the Jewish feast was a symbol of purity (a he-lamb only a year old and without blemish). But when in John's narrative a he-lamb is to be eaten, it becomes the Lamb of God—the incarnate Deity who is to be devoured. This is clearly set forth in John vi: 53–59. The Jews are represented as horrified by this pagan doctrine.

We have not room here to present details of the evolution of the pagan doctrine of the "eating of a god," but the fact of its fundamental prevalence in all the primitive religions may be indicated by a practice that prevailed in Mexico ages

[6] Lev. xxiii: 9–14.

before the advent of Christianity. In the festival in honor of the fire-god, the celebration consisted in making a dough image of the Deity and *raising it on a cross;* the image was then reached up to by the priest and fragments of it thrown to the worshippers who eagerly ate it, thus being taught to believe that they acquired union with the deity of whose symbolical body they partook. Robertson has discovered some evidence that among the first Christians the Eucharist was sometimes a dough image of a child, and Fraser in *The Golden Bough* gives numerous examples of the common celebration among the ancients known as the "Eating of the God."

Through the course of the ages the semblance of this custom was gradually reduced to a mystical formula, indicated in the sacrifice of a pure male lamb yearling among the Hebrews, and the Lamb of God among the Christians, in each case the lamb being eaten, among the later Hebrews as a consecration to purity and righteousness and among the early Christians as an act of unification (transubstantiation) with the crucified Lord. John's Gospel distinctly enunciates the mystical interpretation in the words of Jesus: "I am the bread of life, I am the living bread which came down out of heaven; yea and the bread I will give is my flesh. . . . He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood *abideth in me and I in him.*"[7]

The identification of the Christian symbolism with the ancient pagan usage could not be more clearly indicated. This mysticism is however nowhere as boldly set forth by the Synoptists, although it is vaguely involved.

II

The entire Gospel of John deals with these mystical, occult, abstract, metaphysical conceptions, which are set forth not in

[7] John vi: 48–56.

parables and homely illustrations as in the Synoptics, but in ideological phraseology adapted from the neoplatonic school of philosophy. Indeed one of the surprises we meet in this Gospel, when comparing it with the others is that all the beautiful, homely parables in Matthew, Mark and Luke are omitted, and in their stead we find protracted discourses, prolix prayers and involved, mystical allusions. The speeches and sermons which John has Jesus deliver make Him appear rather like a solemn stoic resigned to His fate without a tear, but, conscious of His supremacy, moving among the stars and envisioning a supermundane world. If this writer had not retained a few of the incidents and scenes previously narrated in the synoptic writings his Jesus would have appeared so different from theirs that if not duly labeled He would never have been acknowledged as the same hero. John's Jesus does not come to earth through the portals of humanity. He does not, even like Paul, intimate that "he was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh." He comes out of the nowhere into the everywhere.

"The Word was God, and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," he declares; but whence He came or where, in any human sense, the writer fails to inform us. Having arbitrarily conceived a "god made flesh," he deigns to give us no further revelation or understanding of the mystery.

What is his genealogy? Matthew and Luke undertook to tell us, however inconsistently and irreconcilably. But John says naïvely: "The same was in the beginning with God." His office is not primarily to lead men to repentance and concern Himself with human affairs. His work is cosmic. "All things were made by him and without him was not anything made that hath been made." He is not apparently a Savior on earth but a thaumaturge in the skies.

True he "was made flesh"; yet the material form was in John's view, after all, but "a light that shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not." He is an ignis fatuus:

a floating phenomenon flitting among men. "He was in the world and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not."

These descriptions, so unlike the human figure of the synoptic hero are, nevertheless, quite in keeping with the then existing doctrines of the prevalent pagan religions. The Logoi of the Stoic, the Logos of Philo, the Wisdom (Sophia) of the Gnostics, the Word (Logos) of John, are all commixtures of Grecian, pagan and Jewish-Christian conceptions. John clearly uses the term, "Son of God," in exactly the same sense as did the Alexandrian Jewish philosopher, Philo,[8] who was permeated with neoplatonic philosophy, and this Johannine Jesus, or Son of God, is as far removed from the child born of a virgin, "whom thou shalt call Jesus," as heaven is from earth.

When John says, "the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father," he expresses in semi-Hebraic language what Philo had already asserted in the mystical phraseology of neoplatonic philosophy. "I stand between the Lord and you," says Philo's "Son of God"; "and I am neither uncreated like God, nor created like you, but a *mean* between two extremes." The language only is different; the thought is the same. John calls his hero the "Mediator." Philo calls him "the mean" between God and man. John's system of Christianity is Philo's neoplatonic philosophy.

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[8] Philo with the great record before him of the religious experience of his race, . . . linking the Hebrew phrase, "the word of the Lord," with the Stoic Logos Spermaticos and Plato's Idea, he found in the resulting conception a divine, rational and spiritual principle, immanent in man and the universe. . . . He pictures the Logos as the Son of God, as the First Born, the oldest of the angels, the "idea of ideas" and again as the image of God, and the ideal in whose likeness man was made. As the Ambassador of God and High Priest, the Logos is able to mediate directly between God and Man, and bridges the gulf that separates us from the Absolute. *Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire*, T. R. Glover, p. 289.

When Clement (of Alexandria) . . . came to discuss Christ, he found Philo's Logos ready in his hand and he was not slow to use it.

John's very language indeed can be traced to its paganistic or platonic origin. The words "only begotten of the Father" (so apparently original with this writer) philologists have proved to be a pagan sentiment or doctrine couched in semi-Hebraic terms. Max Muller has diligently traced the concept, "the only begotten of the Father" or "the only begotten Son," back to a fragment of Parmenides and Plato's Timaeus. "Here," he boldly says, "in this intellectual mint the metal was melted which both Plato and the author of the fourth Gospel used for their own purposes." [9]

In fact, so definitely is the fourth Gospel a syncretism of Hellenic or neoplatonic philosophy and Jewish tradition that nobody but a man reared under the influence of the then prevalent Alexandrian culture could have produced it. The contention that an illiterate and ignorant Palestinian fisherman or peasant, environed physically and mentally only by the teachings of the synagogue, was its author, is on its surface abortive and self-contradictory.

The amazing novelty of this Gospel, and its manifest unassimilability with the preceding narratives of the New Testament, has forced the acknowledgment of even orthodox theologians. "It is impossible," says Canon Wescott, "to pass from the Synoptic Gospels to that of St. John without feeling that the transition involves the passage from one world of thought to another. No familiarity with the general teachings of the Gospel, no wide conception of the character of the Savior, is sufficient to destroy the contrast which exists in form and spirit between the earlier and the later narratives."

And yet, strange to say, in spite of this courageous admission, the orthodox continue to regard the fourth Gospel as equally a divine revelation with the Synoptics, notwithstanding it actually neutralizes, if, indeed, it does not annihilate the alleged revelation in these narratives. John's Gospel may be characterized as an argument rather than a narrative. He sets

[9] *Psy. Rel.* p. 411.

out with a distinct and logical purpose; and his propaganda is far more evident than the implied propaganda involved in the preceding writings; his purpose is to prove beyond a doubt that Jesus was the Deity—the human being known as Jesus was the incarnate Supreme Being of the universe.

This doctrine, as we have seen, was merely intimated or suggested in the Synoptists' messages. There we find that the most positive intimation of the deityship of Jesus fell from the lips of demented victims, demoniacs possessed of "a legion of devils." [10] But Jesus is shocked by their acclaims and orders them to keep silent or incarnates them in a herd of swine which become demented. When in a moment of intuitive illumination Peter excitedly exclaims "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus commands that he tell no man that He was the Christ. In these first Gospels (especially that of Matthew and Mark) we are forced to read between the lines for the discovery of a full and uncompromising enunciation that Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth, is the Son of God and the incarnate Deity. But in John it is manifest on almost every page. It is, indeed, questionable whether, if there had never been a fourth Gospel, the doctrines of the divinity of Jesus and the Trinity would have been promulgated. None of the other Gospels sufficiently sustains the doctrine to afford it a positive, authoritative foundation.

Proof of this statement is discovered in the fact that in John's gospel alone could the introduction of a forged passage emphatically announcing the Trinity find a place. Only in this epistle could a pious redactor dare to interpolate the words: "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost" [11] No fitting place for such language could be found in the preceding narratives.

John's disposition is to magnify the magical powers of Jesus, and by the speeches which the author attributes to him he

[10] Matt. viii: 29.
[11] I John v: 7.

proclaims the divinity and supernatural elements of his hero. Most of the miracles for which John vouches are of the sensational and dramatic type. But in the early Gospels the Man of Nazareth performed His miracles chiefly in privacy and insistently enjoined secrecy upon His beneficiaries. In John, on the contrary, the miracles are executed in public with a view of attracting attention to his hero's divine nature and assuring His witnesses of the sanction of His Father in heaven.

When, for instance, St. John narrates the mission of John the Baptist, he enlarges on the descriptions of the Synoptists with the evident purpose of magnifying the supernatural attributes of the Savior. Thus he alone of the Evangelists causes the Baptist *himself* to attest the divinity of Jesus; "I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."[12] But in Matthew it is Jesus only who beholds the Spirit descending upon His head in the form of a dove. "Jesus . . . when he was baptized . . . saw the Spirit of God descending upon him, . . . saying this is my beloved Son."[13] Mark also says it was Jesus who "saw the heavens rent asunder and the Spirit descend."[14] Luke merely records the incident as an alleged fact,[15] but does not say who is sponsor for it. But John seems to think it is necessary to record more than merely the subjective vision of Jesus (a possible hallucination) or the attestation of a biographer. There must be a human witness other than Jesus who sees the extraordinary phenomenon. So in the fourth Gospel it is John the Baptist himself who certifies the descent of the Spirit and the voice bestowing its blessing. As if the writer feared the description of the scene in Matthew and Mark might cause some to attribute the vision to an hallucinatory condition of Jesus, John introduces a new witness other than Jesus and no less a person than the Baptizer himself.[16]

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[12] Jno. i: 29–34.
[13] Matt. iii: 16–17.
[14] Mark. i: 10–11.
[15] Luke iii: 22.
[16] Jno. i: 32.

III

At the time that John wrote (at least a hundred years after the advent of the Savior) doubtless many had come to doubt the biographies recorded in the Synoptics. Therefore it was deemed necessary to write and publish a new narrative to offset the influence of the increasing heretics. Indeed, it is commonly admitted that this was the object of the author of the fourth Gospel.

Reuss says: "There is here no history of Jesus and His teachings after the manner of the other evangelists; but, . . . there is a representation of the Christian faith as a picture of the *antagonism of the world to the truth revealed.*"

Ancient authorities distinctly assert that the Gospel was a polemic and directed against the existing heresies. Irenæus indicates that the Gospel was written against the errors of Cerinthus. Jerome says it was a polemical rejoinder to teachings of the Ebionites, "while others have maintained that the Gnostics or the Docetæ are the parties against whom the polemic of the apostle is directed."

The Docetæ disbelieved in the physical actuality of Jesus, regarding Him rather as a phantom. The answer to this is clearly revealed in the impassioned words of John: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."[17] As I have already said, the Gospel of John is an argument (a polemic) not a mere narrative. Its "facts" are made to fit its theory.

Therefore the writer of this Gospel is not content to record the sayings of Jesus in epigrammatic brevity, as in the preceding Gospels. He expands the passages of the preceding narratives into long, discursive orations. He argues at length, protests with vigor, and fervently insists upon the complete unity of his hero with the Father in heaven. "The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into his hands" says

[17] See McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature*, art. "John."

the Jesus of John. "O Father, glorify thou me . . . with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." [18]

The simple incident related in Matthew and Mark, where Jesus commands a cripple to take up his bed and walk is employed by John's Jesus as a text on which to discourse eloquently concerning His own divine supremacy. The Synoptists merely indicate that Jesus used this incident as a convenient opportunity to rebuke the Pharisees who said contemptuously: "This man blasphemeth." But John records the incident with the avowed purpose of proving the divinity and supernatural mandate of his hero.[19]

Examining the speech rendered by Jesus on this occasion according to John we note that He claims equal power with the Father to give life and to take it; He usurps the judgeship of the Father ("The Father judges no man but hath committed all judgment to the Son"); He claims equal authority with the Father to command obedience from all mankind ("All men should honor the Son as they honor the Father"); He claims He Himself is the author of life to give and withhold it from whom He will ("As the Father hath life in Himself so hath he given the Son to have life in Himself"); He is the author or originator of His own life and can do with it what He will ("I have power to lay down my life and to take it up again"); He sets Himself up as the absolute and final Judge of all ("He hath given him authority to execute judgment; he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; he that believeth not the Son, . . . the wrath of God abideth on him").

Nowhere in the preceding narratives do we find such expressions of self-exaltation and supremacy attributed to the Rabbi of Nazareth. "Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden and I will give you rest; for I am lowly of heart."

Such are the humble words of the synoptic Jesus. True He also said, slightly in the manner of John's hero: "All things

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[18] John xvii: 5.
[19] John v: 2–47.

have been delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, save the Father, . . . and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him." However the very context evinces the spirit of humility in which He utters the words, for He proceeds, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek."[20] Nevertheless as I have already remarked the Jesus of the Synoptists is inconsistent with Himself.

Here, notwithstanding, is no self-exalting spirit of supremacy and overawing divinity, but the melancholy utterance of a man who feels himself endowed with a great mission, yet touched with the spirit of humility.

Nowhere in the three Synoptic Gospels do we find such self-glorification, such unequivocal identification of the Son with the Father; such magnification of the Jesus-ego, such authoritarian superciliousness as John depicts. Here, indeed, is a self-aggrandizing Jesus, markedly distinguishable from the gentle Jesus of Mark, the cautious and diplomatic Jesus of Matthew, the tender and broadly sympathetic Jesus of Luke. Each biographer we observe created his own characteristics of Jesus to fit the requirements of changing epochs, complexioned by the author's peculiar predilections.

IV

One fact stands out quite prominently; it is that whoever this John was he could not have been a Jew, versed in the traditions of his race. The first indication of this occurs in Christ's conversation with Nicodemus in the third chapter of this gospel. The writer makes Nicodemus appear to be dumbfounded when Jesus informs him that he must be born again to enter the kingdom of heaven. "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Nicodemus asks, staring in amazement.

[20] Matt. xi: 27.

Now certainly no "ruler in Israel" could have evidenced such stupidity, unless he were thoroughly hypocritical. "It is well known," says the author of *Supernatural Religion,*[21] "that the common expression used in regard to a proselyte to Judaism was that of being born again, with which every Jew, especially every 'ruler of the Jews,' must have been acquainted."

The fundamental purport of baptism among the Jews was that of cleansing the soul of all impurity and becoming like a new born child.[22] According to the Talmud the bathing in "the water" is "to constitute a re-birth when the subject becomes like a child just born."

If this understanding of the meaning of baptism was so common among the Jews, how could a ruler in Israel have asked so stupid a question of Jesus as John puts into the mouth of Nicodemus?

Evidently the writer of the fourth Gospel, being bent on exalting the prerogative of the "Logos" (the Word of God revealed through Jesus), caused a ruler in Israel to appear ignorant and absurd in order that his hero might appear superior in understanding. "There is no doubt," says one writer, "that the scene was ideal, and it is scarcely possible that a Jew could have written it."

Why it has not always been plain to even the most cursory reader of the Johannine Gospel that it was not a Jewish effusion but sprung distinctly from pagan sources is quite surprising. The audacious prologue is itself so manifestly a pagan declaration that one would have surmised it carried on its surface sufficient indications of its source to warn all serious students.

As I have already suggested, the word "Logos," in vulgar parlance, gave away the secret. No unhellenized Jew in Palestine could possibly have employed this mystical term. Cer-

[21] P. 446.
[22] See *Jewish Encyclopedia,* art. "Baptism."

tainly no unlettered common fisherman or peasant could have heard of it, say nothing of using it like a philosopher.

Whoever in those times taught the doctrine of the Logos instantly revealed his initiation in the mysteries of Alexandrian neoplatonism which prevailed at the time Christianity was introduced. The learned Max Muller says in his *Psychological Religion* while discussing the meaning of the term: "Logos is a Greek word, embodying a Greek thought. It has its antecedents in Aristotle, in Plato; nay its deepest roots may be traced back as far as the ancient philosophies of Anaxagoras and Heraclitus. . . . Whoever used it and in whatever sense he used it, *he had been under the influence of Greek thought;* he was an intellectual descendant of Plato, Aristotle, of the Stoics and the Neoplatonists. To imagine that either Jews or Christians could adopt a foreign terminology *without adopting the thoughts embodied in it,* shows a strange misapprehension of language." (Italics mine.)

V

John's story can scarcely be regarded as a narrative of Jesus supplementing the Synoptic narratives; for it is clearly a new invention, a dramatic presentation of a mythological concept "embodied in Greek thought," ingeniously woven in the fabric of a legendary Jesus, whose name somehow had been noised abroad.

The fourth Gospel is indeed a startling exposure of how the "Lives of Jesus" were composed or conceived; it reveals how the authors constructed the biography of their hero out of the substance of vague rumors, shaping it according to their individual intelligence or complexioned by the ideological thought of the times, at length launching it upon the world as an historical reality.

Almost all that was written about Jesus in the preceding narratives is deleted in John's narrative, and instead of those

simple, familiar memorabilia we are treated to a series of prolix, mystological discourses which it would have been impossible for the Jesus of Matthew, Mark or Luke to have uttered. The synoptic Jesus is a teacher of practical morality, employing direct, commonplace, familiar and but slightly rhetorical language. The Jesus of John is not an ethical teacher but a theologian, expounding a complex doctrine in mystifying, repetitious, tedious and fustian orations.

Compare, for instance, the simplicity and human element of the Sermon on the Mount, with the grandiloquent prayers and ponderous abstractions recorded in John xiv and xv. The writer who formulated the Beatitudes could by no possibility have composed the labored deliverances which John attributes to Jesus.

In the Beatitudes the burden of the thought is objective: it stresses the value of duty and obedience to moral ideals with the consequent mutual benefits ensuing. But in the Johannine orations the stress is on the glorification of the Son of God. Matthew's Jesus says: "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth; blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." Each one of the Beatitudes points to an earthly and personal fruition. But John's objective is not the benefit that shall accrue to them that "shall be called the sons of God" because of dutiful obedience. His objective is the absorption of the worshipper in the personification of a mystical ideal.

The emphasis is on the glorification of Jesus. "Ye believe in God believe also in Me." "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him": "Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me?" "And whatsoever ye ask of me that will I do." But why will He do it, according to John? Is it that the poor in spirit may possess the kingdom; that mourners may be comforted; that the merciful shall obtain mercy; that peacemakers may be called sons of God?

No, those are the words and promises of the Jesus of Matthew. But John's [23] Jesus promises to do whatsoever they ask, "that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

The emphasis in John moves away from immediate moral obligations between human beings and enjoins a subjective attitude—faith in the Glorified One.

The same deduction follows from the incident where the young man comes to Jesus and asks the way of eternal life. In Matthew the Master recalls to the suppliant's mind the well known formula of the law.[24] Obedience to human obligations was the substance of Christ's reply. But in John, when Thomas, the skeptical apostle, exclaims: "Lord we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" Jesus replies in semi-mythological phrase: "I am the way, the truth and the life." [25]

When Jesus in Matthew says to the young man: "Take up thy cross and follow me," He explains what He means by "taking up the cross" through his command that he sell all that he has and give it to the poor.[26] That was "following Him"; by doing a good deed to his fellow man. But in John the emphasis of Jesus is not on a human deed, but on faith in Him. "No one cometh unto the Father but by me. I am the way, the truth and the life. I am in the Father and if you see me you see the Father."

The Jesus of the Synoptists regards His mission to be the betterment of earth's condition and the establishment of justice and good will among men. The Jesus of John finds His mission in the skies, searching for "the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world," in the glorification of the Father and the Son who "descended from heaven." So far as human interests are concerned the Jesus of the Synoptists is centripetal; the Jesus of John is centrifugal. They are as

[23] Jno. xiv: 13.
[24] Matt. xix: 16–20.
[25] Jno. xiv: 5–6.
[26] Matt. xix: 21.

unlike as simple ethical principles are from metaphysical abstractions.

Observe once more, that when the young man above referred to addresses Jesus, as "good Master," the latter modestly rebukes him and disclaims any right to the appellation, "good." There is but One who is good and that is the Father in heaven.

But when John's cosmic Jesus contemplates himself the element of modesty is entirely wanting: "I have glorified thee on earth, and now, O Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." No such language attributed to Jesus can be found anywhere in the Synoptic Gospels. The reply of Jesus to the young man in Matthew is that of a serious Jewish rabbi. In John, the prayer of Jesus reveals the utterance of one carefully schooled in the neoplatonic thought that pervaded the Hellenistic Jewish atmosphere during the first century of the Christian era.

It is impossible to construct a consistent and identical character from elements so divergent and contradictory.

We can, however, understand the supplications and speeches attributed to Jesus in John, when we study them with the key provided by Hellenic mythologic tradition. If you know your Philo you will have some conception of what the Johannine Jesus may have meant when speaking as if He were an Hellenic Hebrew.

If you know the teachings of Plotinus, Porphyry, and other neoplatonists whose philosophy prevailed from the second to the fourth centuries, you may be able to decipher the Johannine Jesus and understand Him with the light reflected from pagan teachings current in the first century of the Christian era. There is evidently no reflection of Christian thought revealed in the earlier neoplatonists. "If we search Plotinus for evidence of any actual influence of Jewish and Christian philosophy, we search in vain. . . . We have to come down to Iamblichus and his school before we find complete correspondence with the Christian Gnosticism of the second cen-

tury; . . . The influence of Christianity on neoplatonism was at no time very considerable'' (Encyclopedia Brittanica [9th ed.] Art. ''Neoplatonism''). But the influence of neoplatonism on both Judiasm and Christianity is clearly revealed in the writings of Philo and of the early Gnostics. As we have noted, Jerome conceives that John wrote to answer some of the gnostic (Christo-Platonic) systems. Therefore only through an acquaintance with the Judea-neoplatonism as shown in Philo, or the theology of pagans who transposed their systems into Christian ideals, are we able to apprehend the position that the Gospel of John holds in the evolution of early Christianity.

John's doctrine of Christ as the immediate intercessor with the Father for the benefit of His followers is apparently a reflection of Philo's pietistic philosophy. Says Philo: ''To this Archangel, and eldest Word, the Father, who created the universe, has given the supreme gift that He should stand on the confines separating the creature from the Creator, and this Word is forever an intercessor before the Immortal God for mortal man who is in affliction; He is also the Ambassador of the Ruler to His subjects.'' [27]

The similarity if not identity of this Philonian concept with that of John is very distinct. ''If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.'' [28] Paul, even more emphatically, indicates the source of this doctrine, as clearly an echo of Philo, when he asserts: ''It is Jesus Christ . . . who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.'' This would seem, indeed, to be but an explanatory interpretation of the teaching of Philo, as if to say: ''the Word, or Archangel, which we have understood is forever an intercessor before the immortal God, is Christ Jesus who is at the right hand of God and is our intercessor.'' The close resemblance of the two

[27] Quoted in *Supernatural Religion*, Vol. II, p. 294.
[28] I John ii: 2.

doctrines cannot be glossed to demonstrate its originality in the Christian system.

The fourth Gospel seems to be an excellent illustration of the merging of old Hebraic teachings with the fundamental Greek philosophy which gradually developed from Plato's system to the Greco-Hebraic ideals finally elaborated in neoplatonism.

The emphasis of the doctrine of the Logos in the fourth Gospel demonstrates this. It was an ideal vaguely foreshadowed in ancient Jewish writings, woven into a systematic philosophical theology by Philo and culminating in John's Gospel in the personification of a divinity, namely Jesus Christ. Says the author of *Supernatural Religion:* "There can be no doubt that, however the Christian doctrine of the Logos may at one period of its development have been influenced by Greek philosophy, it was in its central ideal mainly of Jewish origin. . . . Wherever in the Sacred Records God had been represented as holding intercourse with man, the translators either symbolized the appearance or interposed an angel, who was afterwards understood to be the Divine Word." This sentence refers to the author's discovery that the translators of the Septuagint were instrumental in showing "the progress of the theory which culminated in the Christian doctrine of the Logos." He then proceeds: "In the School of Alexandria the active Jewish intellect eagerly occupied itself with speculation, and in the writings of Philo, especially, we find the doctrine of the Logos elaborated to almost its final point, and wanting little or nothing but its application in an incarnate form to an individual man to represent the doctrine of the earlier canonical writings of the New Testament."

VI

The abruptly contrasting character of the Jesus of John in comparison with the hero of the Synoptists was, indeed,

made the ground of serious objections to his Gospel, even so early as the second century of our era. There existed at that time a sect known as the A-Logoi (meaning opposed to the Logos) which prevailed in Asia Minor and which definitely rejected the Gospel of John from the authentic writings of the apostles, denouncing it as untruthful and revolting.

Concerning these sectarians Max Muller says: "They denied even that this Gospel was written by John, because it did not agree with the other Gospels; nay they even went so far as to say that this Gospel ascribed to John lied as it did not say the same things as the other Gospels."

Bear in mind that these sectarians were not heretics at the time, or excommunicated, but strictly conservative and orthodox. By the accusations and admissions of this sect we are led to realize that even at so early a period many among some of the believers must have entertained suspicions of the authenticity of all the Gospels and that they had been humanly manufactured and were uninspired. For if one organized body of sectarians, like the Alogi, could doubt John's Gospel, which had already gained a wide recognition and had attained official authentication as a divine revelation, why would not others have been justified in suspecting other Gospels also. We know, indeed, that this occurred and as a consequence numerous sects developed because of a widespread distrust of the genuineness of the Gospels, which, when the canon was finally established, were cast out of the synagogue of faith and denounced as heretical.

From this fact we may learn that even in that far off age there was a deepening suspicion that the Gospels, or so-called lives of Jesus, were nothing more than humanly conceived biographies differing from one another according to the peculiar psychology or milieu of the authors, as Faustus had declared in his oration against Augustine. And perhaps this primitive suspicion was justified by the truth. For we see how even in our own times new lives of Jesus may be manufactured, by

using nothing more than the material provided by our present Gospels, which are mutually inconsistent and contradictory.

Out of legend and rumor almost any kind of character may be evolved. Hence today we have, for instance, such a universalist Jesus as that of Canon Farrar's, or Renan's rationalistic Jesus or the mystical Jesus of Mary Austen, or Papini's Roman Catholic Jesus, or the pragmatic Jesus conceived by George Moore. Just as these Jesuses were made out of whole cloth (the cloth represented in the conflicting gospel stories) so the Gospels were doubtless themselves constructed out of contradictory and dubious legends that filled the atmosphere of that epoch.

VII

But to return to John's Gospel. As I have already said, his Jesus is a preaching Jesus, a Jesus of long, tedious, wearisome prayers. The Man in the Synoptics, who taught His disciples to pray quietly and in the enclosure of their closets the brief appeal of the Lord's Prayer could hardly have been the same individual who delivered the prolix, discursive, theological prayers of the Johannine Jesus.

Never does He attempt a miracle unaccompanied by a didactic discourse or converse with His disciples except in oratorical disquisitions. Contrary to the retiring disposition of the Jesus of the Synoptists the Jesus of John is given to exhibitionism; He invites publicity; He assumes dramatic attitudes.

His programme of miracles is far more imposing and sensational than that of His predecessors. Whoever wrote this Gospel, it could not have appeared till well into the second century, at least a hundred years after the advent of his hero. He seems, therefore, called upon to afford his hero a more picturesque and dramatic appeal than what the preceding narratives had permitted. As an illustration of this fact contrast

the curing of a deaf man as told in Mark and the curing of a blind man as told in John. In Mark, we read:

And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to lay his hand upon him. And he took him *aside from the multitude privately,* and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat, and touched his tongue; and, looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. And his ears were opened, and the bond of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain. And he charged them that they *should tell no man.*[29]

But in John we read:

And as he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind? Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents; but *that the works of God should be made manifest in him.* We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work. When I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed his eyes with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went away therefore, and washed, and came seeing. The neighbors therefore, and they that saw him aforetime, that he was a beggar, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Others said, It is he. Others said, No, but he is like him. He said, I am he. They said, therefore, unto him, How then were thine eyes opened? He answered, The man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to Siloam, and wash; so I went away and washed and I received sight. And they said unto him, Where is he? He saith, I know not.

They bring to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. Now it was the sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Again, therefore, the Pharisees also asked him how he received his sight. And he said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and I see. Some, therefore, of the Pharisees said, This man is not from God, because he keepeth not the sabbath. But others said, How can one that is a

[29] Mark vii: 32–36.

sinner do such signs? And there was a division among them. They say, therefore, unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, in that he opened thine eyes? And he said, He is a prophet. The Jews therefore did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and had received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight, and asked them saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents answered and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but how he now seeth, we know not; or who opened his eyes, we know not; ask him; he is of age; he shall speak for himself. These things said his parents, because they feared the Jews; for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man should confess him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents he is of age." [30]

The question is repeated again and again that the climax may be reached.

Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and finding him, he said, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him? And he it is that speaketh with thee. And he said, Lord I believe. And he worshipped him. And Jesus said, For judgment came I into this world, that they that see not may see; and that they that see may become blind. Those of the Pharisees which were with him heard these things, and said unto him, Are we also blind? And Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye would have no sin; but now ye say, We see; your sin remaineth."

He then launched into a "Verily, verily, I say unto you," which runs into a long harangue.[31]

The simple story told in Mark of healing a deaf and dumb man away from the multitude and in private is thus substituted by John with a long drawn out, repetitious series of incidents, with the manifest object of demonstrating the claim that the Christ is the Son of God, in the person of Jesus. He puts upon His lips not the modest request that those who saw the healing should tell no man of it, but a theological dis-

[30] John ix: 1–34.
[31] John x: 1–21.

quisition, involved and belabored, to prove that He is the only begotten and true Son of God. And this he does ostentatiously before the multitude who came to see and listen and discuss till divisions arise among them, and the mob indulges in secret plottings.

I have paralleled these two scenes to demonstrate that the Jesus of Mark and the other Synoptists presented a totally different aspect than that of John; that the modesty of the former develops into the eager exhibitionism of the latter; that in the former the executon of a miracle was merely that an afflicted one might be healed, but in the latter that it may afford John's hero an opportunity of preaching and expounding a mystical doctrine on which the salvation of those who heard depended. They that see (that is, accept, His teaching) shall not be blind. But they that see not, that is, refuse to humble themselves, shall be turned into blindness. The synoptic Jesus is an humble benefactor, asking for no advertising or adventitious publicity. The Johannine Jesus is a mystagogue, performing His miracles in the streets for all to see and bitterly denouncing those who refuse to acknowledge His mastership and mission. How can these two characters be the same individual?

VIII

But it cannot have escaped the notice of the intelligent reader of the fourth Gospel that the most sensational and supernatural of all the alleged miracles was alone mentioned by this author. The incident of raising the dead Lazarus from the grave awaited the appearance of this belated narrative before the world was made aware of it. Had Jesus really raised a man from the grave where he had lain four days till the body began to putrify, one may feel assured that the report of it would have become so wide-spread that it would have caused critical comment had the first records failed to

notice it. Nevertheless, none of the earlier narratives had mentioned it. John is the first to make reference to it when he wrote at least one hundred or one hundred fifty years after the supposed miracle was said to have taken place.

The scene of the raising of Lazarus rivals in importance that of the resurrection of Jesus. Yet, the earlier Evangelists are silent; only the last refers to it in a far off age when everybody concerned in the transaction or any possible witnesses of it must have been dead. The portraiture of Jesus which John attempted called for deeper tints of mysticism and features of more miraculous nature than the less sensational ventures of the preceding biographers. While there was already considerable in those narratives which seriously strained the tension of intelligent credulity, there were, nevertheless, wanting supernatural elements which were to be looked for in the achievements of one who was the very incarnate of the Supreme Being of the universe, with whom all things are possible. Therefore, how natural it must have been for Him to achieve a miracle only less stupendous than the raising of Himself from the pit of death. What could not be expected of Him? How naturally the calling back from the grave of a man dead and long buried fitted into the mystical and occult drama of St. John, who acclaimed his hero as one to whom it was given to lay down His own life, at will, and take it up again.

John indeed seems to feel an apology is necessary for his intrusion of novel matter into his narrative and therefore states that his hero said so many wonderful things and accomplished so many miraculous feats that "the which, if they should be written, every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written." [32] Here we obtain a vivid picture of the vast sea of rumor relating to the "Son of Man" which surged in that age upon the shores of credulity. The world was already deluged with say-

[32] John xxi: 25.

ings and doings so infinite in number that each biographer suffered with an embarrassment of riches. John's significant admission presents us a hint of how the Gospel legends originated and whence the pigments which the evangelists employed in painting the character of their hero were derived. It accounts for the diversities and contrastive idiosyncrasies attributed to the Jesus in the four Gospels, which we have seen in this study to be quite numerous. It reveals to us how those writers gathered from an immense field of legend and gossipy lore, such incidents and rumored sayings as fitted into the frame of their predilections and purposes. These four different portraitures were doubtless founded on some elements of fact, whether historical or semi-historical, which could be easily woven into the diverse characters the writers conceived without doing violence to their conscience or intelligence.

In the same manner as I have already noted, we witness in our own age contradictory characters of Jesus constructed out of the Gospels themselves, mingled with the self-conscious predilections of the writers. A Renan conceives and portrays a Jesus distinctly heretical, yet so ingratiating and lovable that he deceives the faithful: a thoroughly Renanesque Jesus, the spiritual re-embodiment of himself. A Bernard Shaw transmogrifies the mendicant prophet of Palestine into a modern Marx, surcharged with the philosophical ideals of Socialism. A Bruce Barton ingeniously rearranges the elements of the Gospel Jesus, friend of the poor and denunciator of the rich, and reveals to us a Rotarian Jesus intimately acquainted with the intricacies of Wall Street and the psychological ethics of modern capitalism.

As the biographical Gospels were woven out of the volatile substance of ancient legends, evolving a hero variable with the writers' predisposition, so in art, have we a Michelangelo's Christ in marble, virile and athletic and, on canvas, a Guido Reni's Jesus, sombre countenanced and ascetic, or Carlo Maratta's smiling and genial Jesus. Likewise in literature a

George Moore's dreamy Essene, a Renan's philosophical anarchist; and even the half-wit Jesus of Hauptmann's *The Fool in Christ*.

The same process doubtless prevailed among the Evangelists who selected from the regional rumors that had sprung up from some mysterious source such portions as appealed to their predispositions, or were necessary to neutralize the effect of advancing heresies, or to fill up hiatuses in preceding narratives which seriously endangered the loyalty of the credulous.

CHAPTER VII

"THE FIFTH GOSPEL," ACCORDING TO SAUL OF TARSUS

WAS PAUL'S HERO A METAPHYSICAL ABSTRACTION OR A HUMAN BEING—SAUL OF TARSUS AND THE HELLENISTS—PAGAN MILIEU OF PAUL'S EARLY LIFE—PAUL'S UN-JEWISH AND AUDACIOUS THEOLOGY—PAUL'S SOJOURN IN ARABIA AND ITS CONSEQUENCE—SUBCONSCIOUS ORIGIN OF PAUL'S "REVELATION"—MITHRAISM AND THE PAULINIAN GOSPEL—PAUL'S TOTAL IGNORANCE OF THE HERO OF THE GOSPELS—IN HIS EPISTLES HE PROCLAIMS HIMSELF THE TRUE FOUNDER OF CHRISTIANITY—WARFARE IN THE EARLY CHURCH AGAINST PAUL'S USURPATION—WHY PAUL LABELED HIS TEACHINGS "MY GOSPEL"

Technically there are four Gospels in the canonical New Testament but actually there are five. For the epistles attributed to St. Paul—the Christianized Saul of Tarsus—profess to be a Gospel in the strictest sense.

Indeed the alleged author of these writings claims that they are the only genuine Gospel; contending that other Gospels which appeared to be promulgated in his day were not true, advertising his message as MY GOSPEL, contrary to which if any preach "let him be anathema." [1]

We must not overlook the fact that this Gospel of Paul, namely his epistles, were the first extant output of Christianity of which we have any knowledge; the Gospels in our

[1] Gal. i: 6–8.

own Testament, as well as all other writings purporting to be Gospels in that age, all saw the light many decades or generations after Paul's deliverances.

This being the case, naturally if we are seeking information concerning the personality, the sayings and the career of Jesus, we should appeal to the portions of the New Testament that appeared nearest to the time in which he is supposed to have existed.

Paul's writings, therefore, should be welcomed as the subject matter revealing such acquaintance with Jesus as was common in the minds of the earliest Christians. Remember, for a long time nothing was known to the converts among whom Paul labored, except such knowledge of the Christ as he vouchsafed them.

Now, first, let us observe that the New Testament has been (could it have been designedly?) misarranged. Chronologically it should open with the Epistles of Paul and then should follow the Gospels, first that of Mark, followed by Matthew and Luke, and then the Gospel according to St. John. With such an arrangement, and the approximate dates of the composition of each, we would have a far more intelligent appraisal of the origin and gradual growth of the legend of the Christ. Let us, then, assume that we lived in the period when no other knowledge of the Hero of the Gospels was vouchsafed us than what could be discerned in the writings of St. Paul. How much of the Jesus of Nazareth and His teachings would then be available for us? That is, how much did Paul himself know of Jesus as an actual personality and historical character, so far as his epistles indicate?

To answer this question, we would naturally look first for a detailed description of his hero, and failing to find this, we would look next to the author's terminology, in which a suggestion of his hero's characteristics might be in-

dicated. What do we find? Where do we discover in all of Paul's writings such a description as to reveal to us a clear, objective, historical outline? Does he tell us who his hero was, where He was born, who were His parents, in what region He labored and taught; who were His neighbors, and what was the substance of His ethical or spiritual instructions?

As we shall see, there is not a line in the writings of Paul to afford us the slightest information concerning such intimate enquiries. On the contrary, we find nothing but a *name,* and that cast not in the common verbiage or parlance of daily speech but in vague abstractions, occult terminologies, metaphysical allegories, neoplatonistic mysticisms. A careful analysis of the chief epistles will, I think, fully sustain the above statement.

II

Let us first study Paul's appellations relative to his hero. He knows him as "Jesus the Christ," "Lord Jesus," "Son of God," "born of the seed of David according to the flesh," "Christ our Lord," "Christ crucified," "Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God," "the Lord of Glory," "the first born," "the first begotten," and such like theocratistic terms, whose roots do not penetrate human experience, but sink deep in a soil of theological occultism. By such vague and abstract terms Paul designates the individual whom he also calls, "the image of God," "the maker and preserver of all things," etc. He does not designate Him as a human being; he grants Him no such familiar term, as the "Son of Man," [2] so well known among the Jews; he even avoids the prophetic name of "Emmanuel"; he does not know Him as "Jesus of Nazareth" or "the prophet of Nazareth." He gives Him a name but no local habitation. Indeed he never speaks of

[2] "It is a very striking fact that Paul never uses the title Son of Man at all. . . . If Son of Man was really, as some maintain, 'the favorite self-designation of Jesus,' it will be difficult to explain Paul's avoidance of the term." (*The Story of Jesus,* B. W. Bacon, p. 267.)

Jesus in such terms as to give the impression that he is referring to an actual historical personage.

He seems to have in mind an abstract principle, a metaphysical ideal, personified as a mental image rather than a form of flesh and blood.[3] This is the view reflected in Marcion's works. (*See Appendix E.*) So far as Paul informs us had he not used the name of Jesus he might as well have been speaking of Hermes, or Jupiter or Osiris. Christ is to him a spiritual portrait like to a character evolved in the mind of a reader of fiction, which awakens in the mind of Paul an intense emotional response that culminates in an hallucination. It is the same sort of a worship which a votary at the shrine of Apollo, or Adonis, or Minerva or Mithra might have experienced were he a religiously disposed individual in the ancient pagan world.

III

In Paul's Epistles there is not a single reference to an individual performance or to the social environment of Jesus, save only a questionable reference to the institution of the Eucharist, and certain pointed allusions in the Timothy epistles and an indifferent and misunderstood remark about Pilate, each of which we shall critically examine hereafter. Paul's only insistent contention is that Jesus is the crucified Christ who rose again from the grave. It is a noticeable feature of his writings that where he could most appropriately have quoted the words of Jesus (as in I Thess. iv: 9, v: 2[4] and in many other places) he fails to do so. His lan-

[3] "There is little left of the humanity of Jesus in the Pauline Christ. It would be impossible to reproduce from the epistles of Paul the story of Jesus of Nazareth. . . . The spiritual insight, the ethical maxims, the exquisite parables, the intimate communion of Jesus and His Father, . . . are of slight concern to Paul, compared with the cosmic scheme which absorbs his mind." (*The Apostle Paul and the Modern World,* F. G. Peabody, p. 164.)

[4] Compare Matt. xxiv: 43; see also I Cor. xvii: 2; compare with Matt. xvii: 20; compare I Thess. iv: 9 with Matt. xxii: 37–39.

guage at times borders almost on the words of Jesus, or at least distinctively on the substance of Jesus's thoughts, as when he says: "Ye know brethren the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night." Yet he does not intimate these are the reputed words of Jesus, but sets them forth as his own. Of course, we know there were probably no written Gospels to which he could refer when he wrote his epistles; but if he meant to quote current sayings of Jesus, he would have said so, yet he does not, in spite of the fact that it was his custom frequently to quote from the prophecies when he wished to re-enforce his own instructions.

True, as I have said, no published gospels probably existed in Paul's time from which he could make verbal quotations; nevertheless, if Jesus did preach, and His sayings were well known, some one must have made a record, or, at least, His words must have passed from mouth to mouth and been often repeated; else, how could the Gospels have been finally written (admitting that the gospel records reflect actual sayings of Jesus) purporting to be a record of His deeds and preachments, and that, too, at a time at least fifty to possibly more than one hundred and fifty years after His death? The fact, then, that not one word which Jesus is presumed to have uttered, according to the four Gospels, is quoted or repeated by Paul; that, in addition, no reference whatsoever is made to any of His acts or to His characteristic parables, which could so appropriately have been utilized by Paul in illustration or support of his contentions, especially where in Luke Christ intimates His approval of the absorption of the Gentiles in the Kingdom of God;[5] all this, I say, leads to the presumption that no such sayings of Jesus were known to Paul, or, at least, that Paul implies his ignorance of them.[6]

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[5] Luke ix: 49; also Mark ix: 38–40.

[6] It is noticeable that when at times Paul does *seem* to make reference to statements of Jesus that are recorded in the Gospels, he always says that he receives his knowledge "from the Lord" or from "the word of the Lord." Now let us examine these to see what he means by such ex-

This fact constitutes the crux in the problem as to whether, when he used the name of Jesus, Paul was referring to the same person as known to the original disciples. Was he referring to an historical person, widely known in his day, or, merely to an abstract phenomenon? Or, on the contrary, did he transfer to that name the mystical characteristics and occult atmosphere which, during his epoch, the pagan multitude would have understood as referring to one of their own deities, howbeit colored with a Judaic tint, that had not before been attributed to it? Excepting only that the name of Jesus, as used by Paul, had not yet been heard among the "heathen," every reference to the Christ by him was applicable to Mithra, whose cult at that time was far spread throughout Asia as well as the Western World. As we shall soon show, every characterization of the so-called Christ by Paul carries with it a marked Mithraic symbol.

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pressions. In I Thessalonians, for instance, (iv: 15–17) he says: (v. 15) "For this I say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left at the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep." There is nothing in the Gospels to sustain this assurance. But there is a statement in Matthew * which reads as follows: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in the heavens, . . . and they shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and glory. And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds." This reads very much like what Paul says in I Thess. iv: 16. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air."

In comparing these two passages we must remember that Paul's writings first appeared. Therefore Paul's statement could not have been taken from Matthew. But it may have been a report of what Jesus may have said which Paul had heard from His disciples. However, when we find that such a supposed event was already prophesied to take place when the Son of Man shall come to reign on earth, then we may logically conclude that when Paul said he got his information "by the word of the Lord," he was merely referring to the said scriptural prophecy and not to any words of Jesus which had been reported to him. And that is precisely what we do find. For on referring to the book of Daniel (vii: 13) we discover the undoubted origin of the Paulinian saga. There we read: "I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, . . . and there was given him dominion and

IV

But, first let us examine a controversy that arose among the members of the original fold of the cult of Jesus. It seems strange to me that a more incisive interpretation of this controversy between the Pauline faction and the earlier sect which finally merged in Paul's has not been deduced by commentators.

The entire burden of Paul's epistles evinces the presence of this painful conflict. The orthodox and customary explanation of the controversy is that there were certain Judaizing Christians who punctuated their faith by insistence on obedience to the Mosaic code, which Paul resisted. But while it is true that Paul fought these legalistic casuists, this was by no means the whole substance of the controversy.

A fact, which apparently has been too much overlooked,

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glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations and languages should serve him," etc.

Daniel had already seen the Son of Man coming on the clouds. Paul's assumption of the way the Lord would come was derived "from the word of the Lord" (viz. the ancient Jewish Scripture). On the intimation of Daniel he builds a more dramatic scene. Afterwards when Matthew writes he appropriates Paul's description and records it as a saying or prophecy of Jesus Himself. Thus it is plain, that when Paul says he speaks by "the word of the Lord" he does not necessarily mean that it is the word of Jesus (of which he seems to know nothing), but merely the "word" of ancient Jewish Scripture.

Again, curiously enough, when Paul makes a statement which he apparently asserts as a quotation of Jesus, the said quotation seems nowhere to appear in the Gospels. Thus in Ephesians: "But unto each one of us was given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." **

The gospels fail to reveal this saying on the lips of Jesus. On the contrary we do find a similar statement in one of the Psalms, "Thou hast ascended on High, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men." † It seems all too clear from this that when Paul presumes to quote the "word of the Lord" he reveals no saying of Jesus, but merely refers to some recorded "word" in the Jewish Scripture of old.

* Matt. xxiv: 30–31.

** Eph. iv: 7–8.

† Psa. lviii: 18.

and which Paul himself emphasizes, is that these so-called Judaizing foes of his missionary labors were, indeed, the original Evangelists or recipients of "the glad tidings" which Jesus is said to have vouchsafed humanity. Jesus himself, according to the Gospels, called the original twelve disciples to his side, and afterwards ordained the seventy to preach his message. Other than this He established no organized church. But after His departure a church developed, an organization in Jerusalem, which was presided over by James, "the brother of the Lord," of which Peter, the apostle, became the spiritual leader or father. Now it must not be forgotten that this organization at Jerusalem was not, in any sense, a Christian society. The name of "Christian" was not yet known to them. They were all Jews, and even the term "Christ," a Greek appellation, was as yet unknown to them.

This church was the Church of the Nazarenes; consisting also, quite possibly, of Johannites, or followers of the Baptist. These Nazarenes were the primary followers of the Galilean and proclaimed His mission, wholly unknown to and unacquainted with Paul, in the first stages of its existence. It was a church founded on the teachings of some obscure Nazarene or Essene, to whom the name of Jesus was afterwards given.

Into this already established church, with its ordained apostles and classified leadership, Paul at length thrusts his personal authority. This authority was not at first recognized or acclaimed by them, but was, indeed, stoutly and stubbornly opposed. It is this usurpation by Paul of authority over the teachings and supervision of the primitive followers of Jesus, and possibly John the Baptist, which the so-called "Judaizers" fought so determinedly. It was by no means merely the legalistic problem involved in the retention of the Mosaic rites by the Nazarenes which constituted the bone of contention between them and Paul; but the chief issue was the priority of authority. The supreme question was whether

Peter or Paul, the teachings of James or the innovations of the usurper Paul, should become the prevalent message. That was the essential and the divisive issue.

We need but study the story as told in The Acts, and compare it with the writings of Paul, to realize how true is this analysis of the situation. How did these Nazarenes regard Paul, when at length they became aware of his existence and heard of his approach? Did they receive him with open arms as a co-laborer in the vineyard of "the Lord"? Did they welcome him? No; on the contrary they trembled and shrunk from him. "When he (Paul) was come to Jerusalem he assayed to join himself to the disciples; and they were afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple."[7] He did not come, then, by invitation, but by usurpation.

It is true, we discover an inconsistency in the narrative of Paul's relation to the primitive disciples; for in The Acts he goes directly to Damascus and Jerusalem to be instructed of the disciples there, after his conversion in the desert on the way to Damascus. But Paul in Galatians says: "As touching the gospel which was preached by me, it is not after man; . . . it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ; . . . neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me." He says it was only after three years that he first went there to meet Cephas and then stayed only fifteen days.

Which account we are to trust as to the actual facts, we cannot, of course, at this late day decide. But it is sufficient to know that there must have been some serious reason for the terror of the apostles at Jerusalem when they heard that Paul was coming to them and they shrunk from his presence. The presumption, which we must read between the lines is that the apostles may have heard about his labors, for by the time he first approaches them he had already been in "Arabia" for three years and may have been promulgating

[7] Acts: ix: 26.

his gospel. Then, "after the space of fourteen years"[8] he re-visits the apostles at Jerusalem, and finds the so-called Judaizers there still "spying on him," doubting, disbelieving, fearing him. Why?

Paul is clearly preaching some doctrine of which these original believers in Jesus or the Nazarene had not been apprized. For when Paul, during his travels, meets some of them who had already preceded him in those regions, he refuses fellowship with them and becomes angry because they had invaded some of the societies which he had established. Thus he exclaims, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, . . . before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth *crucified?*"[9]

Here is a plain intimation that the Judaizers had been opposing or contradicting Paul's insistence on a "crucified Christ," through "faith" in whom they shall be redeemed and not by obedience to the law. It calls for little imagination to read between the lines and perceive that the original Nazarenes knew nothing of a "crucified Christ"; they knew only a certain teacher who to them was merely a Jewish prophet or reformer and they looked amazed and with fear on Paul who was introducing so foreign and dangerous a pagan doctrine in their midst.

In Galatians he argues the issue at great length. The question is whether his followers shall exercise faith in a realization of Christ's crucifixion as an assurance of their salvation, or whether they shall insist on obedience to the ancient code as sufficient to redeem them. "This only I would learn of you," he asks these Galatians who have been taught by the "Judaizers" to trust the efficacy of the ancient code, "receive ye the spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"

What does Paul mean by "the hearing of faith"? Some

[8] Gal. ii: 1.
[9] Gal. iii: 1.

translate this "the message of faith." That is, he asks them, have you been saved by obedience to the law or by the message of faith I have brought to you? What does he mean by this message of faith? What can it be but the message of the "crucified Christ"; that is, faith in this crucifixion will free from the burden of the law. This is the doctrine that the Judaizers are opposing, and against which they have "bewitched" Paul's converts. Paul had led the Galatians to have faith in a "crucified" savior. The "Judaizers" had never heard of this crucifixion doctrine and therefore have been teaching the Galatians that the works of the law were sufficient; but Paul exclaims: "No man is justified by the law in the sight of God: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." [10]

Evidently the "Judaizers" (the followers of the Nazarene now known as Jesus), the original Nazarenes, knew nothing of this doctrine, for they were striving to bring the Galatians back to obedience of the law, which taught nothing concerning faith in a crucified savior. If these Judaizers who had "bewitched" the Galatians had known anything of this new doctrine of Paul he would not have been called on to contrast the duty of merely following Jesus as a teacher of ethical principles and faith in Him as a crucified redeemer. It is faith in the "Crucified" on which Paul insists: "The just shall live by faith." But when Paul says this he means faith in what he is telling them, namely that the Christ was crucified for their sakes. That is why obedience to the law is no longer necessary. This is the new doctrine Paul is preaching; this is the reason why the primitive disciples fear him, and refuse to believe that he is a true disciple of the Teacher whom they follow.

However, because from this premise (namely that Jesus was crucified, faith in which is essential to become free from the burden of the law) Paul proceeded to argue the foolishness and inadequacy of circumcision, it has ever since been

[10] Gal. iii: 11, 13.

contended that the abolishment of circumcision was the chief objection of the apostles to the Gentiles. But the exact reverse seems to be the truth. He argued against the adequacy of circumcision not because this was the real bone of contention between him and the primitive apostles, but because circumcision becomes needless once faith is exercised in the crucifixion of Jesus. Therefore it becomes apparent that the new doctrine Paul is introducing, which caused such consternation among the first apostles, is not the abolishment of circumcision and the works of the law, *per se,* but faith in the crucifixion of Jesus as a total substitution for legalism, of which they seemingly had not heard till Paul declared it.

If this is not the correct interpretation of the controversy that prevailed between the two factions of the apostles, between the primitive apostles supposedly appointed by the Lord, and the apostle confessedly "born out of due time" who had never seen the Lord, then why did Paul have to play such a curious part during his visitation at Jerusalem? Why was it necessary for him, after having preached his message for fourteen years in the East, to go up again to Jerusalem and lay before the "elders" in a private conference the gospel he had been so long preaching to the Gentiles?[11] It appears that this gospel was so startling he did not dare openly to declare it to the whole congregation of the church at Jerusalem, but had privately to confer with them "who were of repute, lest by any means I had run in vain." Lest, that is, if he told it to the whole congregation at once, void of the sanction of the leaders, he might possibly be mobbed.

Manifestly this doctrine of Paul was something not only quite different from what the apostles had been inculcating, but revolutionary and appalling. To insist that the difference between them was the revival of an old discussion about circumcision among the learned rabbis, is, as we shall see, absurd and merely looking at the surface of the situation.

[11] Gal. ii: 2.

However, before we examine this question in further detail, we must observe that, as evidenced by the extant gospels, Paul completely converted the original Nazarenes to his new "faith" in the Crucified One; for by the time these Gospels were written the dispute as to the necessity of circumcision and the substitution of faith in a crucified savior, had been completely settled. This is shown by the fact that the doctrine of circumcision, as a requisite of salvation, is wholly omitted in the Gospel teachings. Nevertheless, faint traces, even in the Gospels, may still be discerned, of the lingering interpretation of the Nazarenes, such, for instance, as where Jesus insists on receiving John's baptism, that the law may be fulfilled and "not one jot or tittle of it shall pass away." Also, in the scene presented in The Acts, where Peter is converted to the new "faith" or doctrine of Paul, by the miraculous descent of a sheet from heaven in which miscellaneous foods are found from which he is commanded to eat, despite the prohibitions of the ancient law.[12] Such incidents evidently indicate layovers from precedent traditions, illustrating how the original apostles hesitatingly accepted the inculcation of Paul's revolutionary teachings.

The complete triumph of Paul over the primitive gospel of the Nazarene is shown in the alleged declaration of Jesus that not one jot or tittle of the law shall pass away; for this proved to be false, inasmuch as in the name of the Paulinian Jesus the Mosaic rites did pass away, and it remained for only the heretical sects of that day to insist upon this observance. But the retention of this saying of Jesus in the Gospels illustrates how His real teaching was subordinated and finally annihilated by Paul.

As the matter now stands, of course, it is impossible for us, at this long lapse of time, to learn who the original Nazarene Jesus was or if, indeed, He ever lived. For current Christianity, founded as it is on the Gospels of the New

[12] Acts x: 10–16.

Testament as they were made finally to accord with Paul's "revelation," has accepted as its soteriological hero the Jesus of Paul, who stands forth not as the complement but the contradiction of that Jesus whom a small body of believers (admittedly not more than one hundred and twenty) was alleged to have worshipped in an obscure room in Jerusalem some two thousand years ago. Whence, then, did Paul acquire his knowledge of the Jesus he proclaimed and what was the paramount event in the career of that Jesus which inspired Paul to found a new religion?

V

Saul, known to us as Paul, was born and reared in his early years in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, though later educated, according to tradition, in Jerusalem under the famous rabbi, Gamaliel. It behooves us, therefore, in ferreting out the sources of Paul's new religion, to understand the religious milieu of his early years and the intellectual environment in which he lived. Tarsus was known as a city in which the religion of Mithra was prevalent, if not paramount. The Jews of the Dispersion (that is, those who had migrated from Palestine into Asia Minor, Egypt and elsewhere since the profanation of their temple by Antiochus Epiphanes) in time became thoroughly inoculated with pagan religious conceptions. It is wholly inaccurate to assume that the Jews of the Dispersion remained unalloyed with un-Jewish teachings. They freely mingled with gentiles, contrary to their traditional usage in Palestine, and fondly listened to and absorbed the substance of foreign or pagan philosophy.

"In the Diaspora (the Dispersion) the Jews had been deeply influenced by the Greeks; they soon, more or less, forgot their Semitic mother tongue, and with the language of Hellas they appropriated much of the Hellenic culture. They were deeply impressed by that irresistible force which was blending all

nations and races into one great cosmopolitan unity; and so, the Jews, too, in their dispersion, became in speech and nationality Greeks, or rather Hellenists.'' [13]

Now, even the most orthodox authorities admit that Paul, or rather Saul of Tarsus, merged naturally in this milieu, and that his mentality was complexioned and his religious conceptions affected by it.[14]

Casual readers of The Acts must have marveled how the Jew, Saul of Tarsus, educated in the language and strictest culture of Judaism, ''of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews,'' could have spoken so well in the Greek language as to entertain Athenian philosophers on the Areopagus. Orthodox Jews of Palestine regarded knowledge of any other language than Hebrew a sin. Had Paul not been familiar with Greek culture, at least to some extent, which of course meant familiarity with the pagan religions, he could not have quoted from one of their poets or philosophized so eloquently as he is said to have done, according to the narrative in The Acts.

Studied in his epistles, it is apparent Paul was as much if not more a Greek than he was a Jew. His theology is a marvelous commingling of refined Greek culture and rabbinical lore. He is well acquainted with the ancient Judaic Scripture; but his interpretation is largely allegorical and his metaphysics tinged with Platonic philosophy. He has little to do with the vengeful, murderous phases of the old Jehovah. His deity is a spiritual substance—an alembic in which all gods are fused and made as one, ''in whom we live and move and have our being.'' This quotation of ''certain of your own poets'' as he

[13] *Encyclopedia Britannica,* 9th ed., art. "Philo."

[14] Conybeare and Howson, who have written a classical account of Paul, from the broad orthodox viewpoint, say: "The Hellenists or Jews who spoke Greek, who lived in Greek countries and were influenced by Greek civilization, associated in the closest manner with the Apostle to the Gentiles. They are more than once mentioned in The Acts, where our English translation names them "Grecians" to distinguish them from the heathen or proselyte "Greeks." (p. 44.)

remarked to the Athenians whom he addressed, reveals the bridge Paul built between ancient Platonism and advanced allegorical rabbinism or cabalistic Jewish philosophy.

Indeed, he represented the intellectual segment of the Jewry of Asia Minor, which was distinctly complexioned by the prevalent Grecian culture. Another representative of that group, as we have already noted, was the famous Hebrew philosopher, Philo. Now Philo was, though possibly not thus classifying himself, a neoplatonic Jew; his metaphysics was that of the Alexandrian school. It is impossible to compare the writings of these two eminent Jews—Paul and Philo—without observing the close similarity of thought between them.[15]

Conybeare insists that Philo's writings were known by Paul. Let us recall what Paul says of himself at the beginning of his ministry. What we must undertake to learn is, what supreme motive urged him to sever his relations with Judaism and institute his new faith. Was it an intellectual consequence of the logical deductions of Judaism? Was it the result of his acquaintance with the prophets of old? Was it an influence that in any way emanated from Judaism, or was it the result of the inoculation of pagan mysticism? Is there any way by which we may discover in Paul's writings some solution of the problems above suggested? Let us see.

Paul says of himself, "God who separated me, *even from my mother's womb,* called me through his grace to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles."[16] What else can this mean[17] but that *intuitively* Paul had felt

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[15] "Philo was the great representative of these Hellenists," say Conybeare and Howson. The Hellenists are the Jews who spoke Greek and absorbed Greek culture. "He was an old man when Paul was in his ministry; *his writings were probably known to the apostle,* and they have descended with the inspired epistles to our own day." (Italics mine.) (*Life and Epistles of Paul.*)

[16] Gal. i: 15, 16.

[17] See Bloomfield, Greek Text. The full sense seems to be "who separated and (by implication) destined me to preach the gospel."

a subconscious separation from ancient rabbinism, "even from his mother's womb." Subconsciously he yearned for a universal religion, in which all humanity might be merged, where there would be "neither Jew nor Gentile, Greek nor barbarian." At first it is inarticulate: the conscious "call through God's grace" was not yet realized; but deep down in his vitals, far away in the back of his head, he felt the murmurings that sometime would break forth and overwhelm him with its resounding cry. It does not seem to me that this is too much to read into Paul's suggestive words, that even while in his mother's womb God had separated him from ancient tradition and inarticulately anticipated the audible "call" which sometime he was to hear in the desert sands on the way to Damascus.

But Paul says more than this. He also says that "when it was the good pleasure of God to reveal His Son in him" (that is, as I understand the phrase, when at last he became conscious of the urge that had so long been murmuring subconsciously in the depths of his being) "I conferred not with flesh and blood, . . . but went into Arabia."[18]

Why should he hesitate to discuss this great experience "with the flesh and blood"; why should he run to the wilderness or the desert "far from the madding crowd," unless it was to gather himself together, as we say; that is, when at last the sub-conscious urge had broken through into his consciousness and "revealed the Son," when at last this strange intuitive murmuring became articulate and he understood its demand, he felt it was an experience no man could solve for him, and he runs off to be alone with himself in the desert sands, or in monastery caves.

But here another question arises: What possible encounter did Paul meet with in the desert that may have clarified his experience to himself, that might have interpreted to him the "revelation of the Son"; that might have unfolded to him the

[18] Gal. i: 17.

programme of the new faith with which he was to astound and overcome a heroic group of Palestinian idealists and long after his death to conquer the entire world?

In considering this problem we must not overlook the curious inconsistency between the reference of Paul to this experience and what is said about it in The Acts. I have already remarked on this strange discrepancy, but I return to it now, because of the light it may shed on the problem. Why did Paul tell us that he went immediately into Arabia conferring not with flesh and blood; while in The Acts we read that he went directly into Damascus where there was a certain Ananias who would give him his sight and cause him to receive the Holy Ghost; and why does the narrator say he spent a number of days with the disciples at Damascus? These accounts are absolutely contradictory. Paul says neither anything about being stricken blind nor being cured by Ananias. There must be some reason for the confusion existing in these accounts; for only one of them can be true, if there is any truth in either. Granting that Paul, to whom the experience came, must know the truth, the contradictory account in The Acts appears suspiciously like an attempt on the part of the author of The Acts to conceal something that may have been unwittingly divulged in the writings of Paul. What could this have been? The crux of the whole story is the mystery of Paul's going into Arabia. It is nowhere else mentioned in the Bible.

Returning now to Philo, we may find some light that may dispell the darkness of the problem. In Philo's book, *The Contemplative Life,* we read a description of a certain community of ascetics (the Therapeutæ) with which he seems to have been on such famliar terms that many suspect he was himself a member of it.

The characteristics of this community, as described by Philo, are so similar to those of the primitive Christians, as described by the New Testament, that Eusebius, the Christian

historian (264–349 A. D.) was compelled to admit that it must have been a Christian community.

But historical criticism has completely overthrown this supposition of Eusebius, for Philo nowhere even mentions the name of Christ, but intimates that the sect of the Therapeutæ was in existence long before this time. Indeed, Philo's description of the sect has so completely confused historians that some regard it as a branch of theosophic Judaism, others as identical with the well known sect of the Jews called Essenes, while, as we have observed, some, such as Gratz, the Jewish historian, insist that they were Christians, following the suggestion of Eusebius.

They were apparently a mixture of all these, excepting of course the Christians who were not in existence when the members of this community were first heard of. The fact that Eusebius regarded them as a Christian sect, and that their mode of living and principles of faith were so similar to those of the early Christians, forced some authorities to the conclusion that the work of Philo above referred to must have been spurious, and written by some monk in the third or fourth century to authenticate the practice of monasticism among Christians. But there seems to be no question that the work is genuine and contains a truthful description of the beliefs, rites and customs which prevailed among these ascetics as Philo learned through intimate association.[19]

The strange fact, however, still remains that Eusebius was deceived into believing the Therapeutae to be Christians because Philo intimately describes the *monastic* habits of "the saints." However, the writer on Monasticism in the Britannica says: "There is a general admission among the Fathers that the Monastic life did not begin till nearly two hundred years after Philo had lived." Here, indeed, is a perplexing problem. How shall we solve it?

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[19] See *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 10th ed., art. "Philo," and *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature*, McClintock and Strong, art. "Therapeutæ."

Some insist that the Therapeutæ were a Jewish sect, which had broken away from ancient legalism, devoting themselves to an ascetic life. "There can be no doubt that the Therapeutæ represented a Jewish sect," says McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature.* But the writer further says: "From the Greek derivation of Therapeutæ, we see that there existed a spiritual relationship between the sect and Jewish Alexandrian religious philosophy, and we are led to this assumption when we consider the object which formed the basis of their contempative life."

This, however, does not explain why they should have anticipated the mode of monasticism adopted by the Christian monks some two hundred years after the time of Philo. Nor does it explain why their monastic habits were so similar to the early Christians' that Eusebius was deceived into believing them one and the same.[20]

Though some authors insist they were a Jewish sect, yet they fail to show that monasticism was ever a usage among the Jews. That is, we find a sect, whether Jewish or not, long in existence before the advent of Christianity, so identical in belief and practice with the early Christians that Eusebius refuses to regard them as other than the original Christians themselves. But, as we have seen, the misfortune with this conclusion is that these same Therapeutæ were already long in existence before the time when Jesus was said to have made His advent.

Associated with this perplexity there is another, still more confusing, which Eusebius naïvely propounds. It appears from him that not only were the polity and religious rites of these Therapeutæ identical with those of the earliest Christians but the very gospels which they proclaimed were iden-

[20] So closely resembles the polity of several of the earliest Christian societies that Eusebius devotes a chapter of the *Ecclesiastical History* to asserting their identity, holding that Philo could have been speaking of none other save "Christian ascetics." (*Encyclopedia Britannica,* 10th ed., art, "Monasticism").

tical with the gospels recorded in the New Testament. Says Eusebius: "It is very likely that those scriptures of the ancient Therapeutæ of which Philo speaks were the Gospels and writings of the Apostles."

Now recognizing the fact that the first Christians were all Jews and that the Therapeutæ were "undoubtedly a Jewish sect," having already in their possession "the Gospels and writings of the Apostles," it would seem to be apparent that some phase of what we know as Christianity had already existed before the advent of Jesus.

The issue I am now to discuss is this: When Paul says that immediately "it pleased God to reveal his Son to him," he departed into Arabia, are we to understand that possibly he entered one of these Therapeutic monasteries? Or, perhaps, worded differently, are we to understand that the individual known to us as Paul was one of these Therapeutæ who came out of the desert of Arabia to reveal the substance of their theosophic faith and spread it through the world?

Let us study this possibility. To begin with, Arabia, in those times, was not an exact geographical region as in our day. "From the time that the word 'Arabia' was first used by any of the writers of Greece or Rome it has always been a term of vague and uncertain import." [21]

Now this indifferent region round about the shores of the Red Sea and beyond to the north, both Philo and Eusebius inform us was long fretted with the monastic caves of the Therapeutæ. Now, what did they seek on retiring into their monastic behavior? Says one writer: "Its purpose was to lead to the knowledge of the Deity. To achieve this it was necessary to suppress the material man and elevate the spiritual. For this reason they lived in a very simple manner. . . . Abstinence and moderation they regarded as the foundation of all virtues . . . therefore the Therapeutæ lived secluded from the outside world, . . . living only to themselves in

[21] Conybeare and Howson, *Life of Paul.*

their contemplation." This mode of life is much in agreement with Paul's description of his objective when he "went into Arabia"; for he insists that "he communed not with flesh and blood" but his gospel "was a revelation of the Lord" (that is, by hypothesis, the fruit of "contemplation" which the Therapeutæ practiced).

Paul remained in retirement at least two or three years before he again appeared in Palestine to preach his revolutionary gospel among the Jews. It is noticeable that during the long period of his retirement we have no knowledge that he performed any work or devoted himself other than to the speculative life of studious contemplation.[22]

Now, his going into retirement or seclusion in the desert before beginning his public labors appears to be much like the policy of the Therapeutæ. Says Philo: "As soon as the Therapeutæ begin to philosophize (preach?) they lay aside all the anxieties of life, and leaving society they make their residence in solitary, wild gardens."

Thus far, then, we learn, on the assumption that retirement into Arabia may have meant retirement among the Therapeutæ, that there Paul would have discovered certain writings which are so similar to our Gospels, that Eusebius insists they are identical; (but whether Eusebius referred to the canonical Gospels, or earlier ones like Marcion's is a problem). He would have found, according to Philo, the celebration of a certain supper, bearing so close a resemblance to the Lord's Supper, that Gratz, the Jewish historian, insists they are the same; Gratz may have been mistaken; nevertheless, the marked resemblance between the two is acknowledged, even though in the one unleavened bread is said to have been used, but not prescribed in the other.

22 "The apostle Paul on his conversion retired into Arabia for some two years, but whether this time was spent in preaching or in private exercises is doubtful; nor, is there any record of the fruits of his labors he expended there" (*Encyclopedia of Biblical Literature,* McClintock and Strong, art, "Arabia").

Again he would have learned the art of abstinence and moderation, also, freedom from marriage, "they denied themselves marriage because they preferred to live together with divine wisdom"; here he learned the necessity of silence during worship on the part of women, "who had seats separated from the male members by a wall rising three or four cubits upwards, but in such manner that they could hear the voice of the speaker"; here he learned the doctrine that "the body being the seat of sin, the flight from the corporeal into a purely spiritual existence was the highest aim of life," which he echoed when he exclaimed, "who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" for "in my flesh dwelleth no good thing;[23] here he learned the art of the allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures. ("The Therapeutæ diligently studied the Scriptures and interpreted the same allegorically"); but above all here he may have found those writings which constitute the burden of his Gospel, which he declared was his own and came to him by "revelation" (contemplation?).

After two or three years in the desert, presumably among the Therapeutæ, Paul emerges from the desert monasteries and meets for the first time the disciples or apostles at Jerusalem. However, he meets not the entire congregation, but merely Cephas (Peter). "Then," speaking of his sojourn in Arabia, he says, "after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit (marginal reading "to become acquainted") with Cephas, and tarried with him fifteen days."

Observe that Cephas does not invite him to preach; and Paul meets only one other of the apostles. ("Other of the apostles, saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.")[24] One wonders what could have transpired in this visitation. Paul vouchsafes us not even a hint. One wonders, again, why the visit was so brief. Once more we must ask what Paul ex-

[23] Rom. vii: 18–24.
[24] Gal. i: 18, 19.

pected from the school of the apostles, and whether his brief visitation was not ended because of disappointment. We may rest assured that if Paul had received any information, from this source, it would have related to the career and teachings of the Master. Yet Paul does permit us to know if such information were proffered he was deaf to its utterance. For he assures us that all he knows of Christ came to him not by flesh and blood but by revelation from the Lord.

From what we know of Paul may we not logically conclude that he must have desired to impose upon the attention of the first apostles the burden of the message which he had been preaching, or which at least had enthused him, the absolute originality of which he not only attests but stoutly defends. Insomuch as we learn from him that fourteen years later, after he had grown strong and more assured of the triumph of his message, he again returned to Jerusalem and at that time laid all his programme before them, unburdened himself of his mission, is it not clear that he must have undertaken to do this with Peter and James on the first visit, but, presumptively, they declined to hear him, and therefore he suddenly broke up the conference and left them?

Notice what he says about this second visit: "I went by revelation: and I laid before them the gospel which I preach among the gentiles." Here undoubtedly we have the hint of what must have been in Paul's mind when he first visited Peter and James. He had been meditating, practicing contemplation in the quiet of some monastery: an impulse comes to him that he must leave the cell and go abroad preaching the great inspiration that had descended upon him in the loneliness of the desert. Thus inspired he breaks away and hastens to Jerusalem. At this time he does not yet feel so assured of the convincing power of his revolutionary message that he dares speak of it to any, except to the two leaders of the congregation. But they apparently are not sub-

jugated; they bid him not to press his mission, for as we may logically surmise, what he has told them is so contrary to what they had learned from the Master.

So he goes away. He must test his mission still further. He must be convinced that it is truly the message the Lord has given him. So, at length, his soul is inflamed by the triumph of his cause.[25]

Hence his conviction that he must go again and once more face the pillars of the church with the message to which they would not at first listen. This time he goes "by revelation"; that is, with the assurance of victory. And after an absence of fourteen years, during which time he has set all Asia Minor on fire and subjugated the "churches of Judæa which were in Christ" (that is, followers of the Messiah), he feels courageous enough to lay before them the entire gospel which he had been preaching among the gentiles. This time he wins. He overpowers all their prejudices, fears, antagonisms. That his victory was complete he assures us; for he received nothing from them but compelled them to accept what he had to offer.[26]

VI

Now who were these persons whom Paul goes up to Jerusalem to visit? They are the first disciples or followers of the man known to the world as Jesus. This Jesus is not yet known to them as Christ. They are not yet called Christians. They are the pupils of the Nazarene prophet and are called Nazarenes. These Nazarenes were strict Jews who were taught

[25] "Behold I lie not; I came to the regions of Syria and Cilicia; and I was still unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ; but they only heard say, 'He that once persecuteth us now preacheth the faith of which he once made havoc; and they *glorified God in me.*'" (Gal. i: 20–24).

[26] "They that were of repute imparted nothing to me; but contrariwise, . . . when they perceived the grace that was given unto me, . . . gave me the right hand of fellowship" (Gal. ii: 6–9).

by the Master that not one jot or tittle of the old law should be abrogated. They were obedient to the Mosaic code. The only reason they became a sect apart from other Jews was because they asserted that the prophesied Messiah had appeared in the person of an individual whom the world came to know by the name of Jesus. There was nothing else to distinguish them originally from other Jewish sects.

Paul comes to them and what happens? Does he accept their creed or their Messiah? He assures us that they "imparted nothing unto him." Apparently, as we have already seen and shall further demonstrate, he had never heard of their Messiah. Paul indeed is not subjugated by them; on the contrary they themselves are completely subjugated by him. They shall no longer be known as Nazarenes but as Christians. Their Messiah shall no longer be known as Jesus-Immanuel (pursuant to the alleged ancient prophecy) but as Jesus the Christ! Jesus-Immanuel observed the law. Jesus Christ disdains the law. Jesus-Immanuel insists that he "came only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Jesus the Christ declares His message is to all: Jew, Greek, Barbarian. Jesus-Immanuel teaches it is sin to eat the food of Gentiles. Jesus the Christ commands: "Kill and eat all manner of four-footed beasts and creeping things and fouls of the air: What God hath cleansed make thou not common."[27] Jesus-Immanuel teaches obedience to the rite of circumcision as indispensable to righteousness: Jesus the Christ insists that uncircumcision is no bar to the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus-Immanuel is a Nazarene. Jesus the Christ is a Paulinist. How then can both the primitive Nazarene and the Paulinian Jesus be one and the same person, when in thought and teaching they are so diametrically opposed?

This is the extraordinary triumph of Paul: he has overthrown the first church or organization founded in the name of the Nazarene and absorbed it in the new church founded

[27] Acts x: 15.

by himself. But there is even yet a greater contrast. The point I am now to stress I think has been quite overlooked by critical students. Paul was the first to introduce among the original followers of Jesus the doctrine of spiritual healing through the so-called baptism of the Holy Ghost. Before his entrance on the scene, the objective of the Nazarenes or original apostles of Jesus was quite different. The Jesus of the Nazarenes made his objective—the burden of His message—the repentance of the suppliant as a prerequisite to the kingdom of heaven. The burden of the Paulinian Christ Jesus was the enduement of the Holy Spirit to the end that "mighty works" or miraculous healing might ensue.

The Jesus of the Nazarenes cried: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" . . . "I am not come to call the righteous (those who obey the law) but sinners, (those who disregard or violate the law) to repentance."

These are the words, the burden, of the original Jesus of the Nazarenes. The manifest change in the attitude of the apostles after the invasion of Paul demands incisive investigation. It will be discovered, I think, that not till the Nazarenes were converted to Paul's authority was the doctrine of healing because of the baptism of the Holy Ghost introduced among them.

Before that the insistent and single doctrine was repentance and regeneration of character. John the Baptist and alleged forerunner of Jesus knows nothing of this new doctrine. The baptism of the Holy Ghost is manifestly unknown to him, for he comes baptizing with water, in the Jordan. His is the rite of ancient Judaism, the symbol of water relating only to purification through repentance. John cries: "Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance—make ye ready the way of the Lord."

Clearly this was the primary purport of his teachings and the Son of Man whom he proclaimed agreed with him. This Son of Man, Jesus, demands this Jewish baptism: "Suffer it

now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness" (*viz.*, the formulas of the Mosaic code). That is, by this symbol of purification only can we fully obey the law (the ancient Jewish usage).

Here, however, we must again recall that the Gospels as we now have them were published long after Paul's day. It is therefore easy to perceive wherein they were revised or doctored by some representative of the Paulinian faction. For the Gospels make it appear that John (whose primary mission was repentance void of supernatural accompaniment) says: "As I baptize you with water unto repentance so he shall baptize you into the Holy Ghost." That sentence represents the innovation of the new Paulinian doctrine in the church of the Nazarenes. Whoever wrote the Gospels as we now have them, composed them under the dispensation of Paul's doctrine, which had been permanently established by that time. Yet by a careful study of those writings I think we may be able to separate the original stratum of the Nazarene teachings from the Paulinian stratum that overlays it.

The doctrine which Paul introduced and stressed, which we shall more fully demonstrate later on, was apparently utterly unknown to John; for, as I have already observed, he confesses that he came baptizing only with water; and Jesus sanctions the ancient Jewish rite by submitting to it. That much constitutes the original Nazarene stratum of the narrative. But when the Paulinian doctrine became paramount the narrative shows the entrance of the new doctrine: "Baptized into the Holy Ghost."

Hence the story is highly dramatized: wherein the simple baptism with water is transformed into a mystical symbol of novel import. The water becomes secondary, and the new symbol is represented by a dove, indicating the presence of the Holy Ghost. Among the Jews the dove had never before been recognized as a symbol in the act of baptism although occasionally it had been made to represent the spirit of God.

But water and a dove had never been mutual symbols in the baptismal sacrament among the Jews. This is, therefore, a marked innovation.[28]

Why, then, we ask, was the new symbol substituted and so extraordinarily presented? It seems evident that in this baptismal scene on the banks of the Jordan the writer has undertaken to colorfully dramatize the introduction of a doctrine so novel and revolutionary it must needs require the intervention of supernatural agencies to impress the convert. Under the usurpatious authority of Paul the customary symbol of water (indicating purification and repentance) is supplanted by a symbol indicative of a supernatural instrumentality by which the subject of the new baptism shall be endued with power to perform miracles or "mighty works." (*See Appendix F.*)

This is the reason, I take it, why the writer pictures so grand a scene of causing John to baptize in an open space on the river bank, that a new Jesus may be dramatically introduced; not the simple Nazarene who came preaching repentance, but a Christ who conjures the Holy Ghost and fire from heaven to inaugurate His epoch of miraculous achievements.

VII

With this key we can unlock almost every passage in the Gospels that reflects the teachings of the original Nazarene[29] and those that reveal the innovations of Paul. Almost step by

[28] See *Jewish Encyclopedia*, art. "Baptism."

[29] See Schmidt's *The Prophet of Nazareth*, pp. 236–9, where an effort is made to separate the earlier sayings of Jesus from the later Messianic (Paulinian [?]) additions. Whether, however, his insistence that the parables are wholly original, and not paraphrases of already existing Hebrew parables, may be problematical. Nevertheless, that there was an earlier tradition, vaguely detected in the current Gospels, reflecting a teacher inconsistent with the preachment of the Paulinian epistles, whose doctrines finally prevailed, seems incontestable.

step we can trace the path through which the new doctrine crept into the faith of the original followers of Jesus of Nazareth.

Study what follows immediately after the baptism. Jesus is made to flee into the wilderness and stay there forty days conversing with and fighting the devil. As Jesus has been represented as just endued with the Holy Ghost, Satan is made to challenge Him to prove His power by performing certain miracles. But Jesus, still the Nazarene feeling Himself appointed merely to "call sinners to repentance," rejects the challenge and disdains the tempter. As the "voice from heaven" had acclaimed Him "the Son of God," Satan cunningly advises Him that, insomuch as He had fasted forty days and had become very hungry, He might try his hand at kneading bread out of stones. Now to achieve this marvel would require scarcely more of the Holy Ghost than to turn water into wine or multiply the handful of loaves and fishes into thousands, which He afterwards so easily accomplished. But this Jesus, still the Nazarene, pushes the tempter aside and assures him man was not meant to live by bread alone. Then the devil carries him to the topmost pinnacle of the temple and invites Him to cast Himself down, reassuring Him with the promise that His God had given "angels charge concerning" Him. But this Nazarene Jesus (who, were He the Jesus of Paul, could as easily have achieved this feat as appearing like a phantom out of the nowhere before the disciples who sat at meat after his burial) confounds the tempter by reminding him that there is a law, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

Likewise, when carried to the top of an exceedingly high mountain to cast His eye athwart the world, and Satan sardonically invites Him to bow down and worship him, Jesus suddenly becomes conscious of the folly of attempting impossible miracles and indignantly dashes the evil one aside. In this entire episode we find not a trace of the supernatural

power alleged to have been bestowed by the Holy Ghost, but simply a common sense way of regarding his natural faculties.

Thus far in the narrative the presence of the Holy Ghost is in accord with Jewish tradition. Note, also, according to the Matthew narrative, even when He leaves the scene of the temptation and begins His public work, He seems to disregard wholly the intimation of miraculous endowments and merely cries out: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." [30] From these facts it would appear that the description of the descending dove and the voice from heaven were interpolations or at least were written by a representative of Paulinian principles.

Again we look in vain for any intimation of supernatural agencies, by which to walk aright or to accomplish one's purposes, in the entire Sermon on the Mount. On the contrary where such alleged capacity is claimed Jesus earnestly denounces it. "Lord, Lord, did we not cast out devils and do mighty works in thy name: and then will I profess unto them: depart from me ye that work iniquity." [31] Here we have still the Nazarene who preaches only repentance ("Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness") and who regards miraculous works as "iniquity."

He accomplishes much healing, it is true, during His first sojourn, but there is no intimation that it is done through the workings of the Holy Ghost. Miraculous healing was by no means unknown among the Jews, as is evidenced by the fact that Jesus performed such feats in the synagogues at times. Such accomplishments were regarded by them as mere wonders which Jehovah achieved through special agents.

Once more, examine the numerous parables which Jesus relates. Where will you find in one of them anything relating to the enduement of the Holy Ghost as an essential element

[30] Matt. iv: 17.
[31] Matt. vii: 22, 23.

of His teachings? They all concern themselves with natural human relations and the inculcation of ethical principles.

On the contrary, when Paul seeks to impress the authority of his self-announced apostleship upon the original followers of Jesus, he stresses the attestation of his own miraculous powers, as proofs of his claim. ("I must needs glory—truly the *signs of an apostle* were wrought among you by signs and wonders and mighty works." [32] Evidently the credentials of an apostle, in the view of Paul, did not consist in the commission only to call sinners to repentance, but to achieve mighty works and wonders by the enduement of the Holy Ghost.

Couple this with the charge of Jesus to the twelve whom he had chosen as leaders.[33] Here do we not detect the mingling of the original teaching of the Nazarene with that of the Paulinian innovation? The Synoptic Gospels were written after Paul's new gospel was accepted by the apostles. In this instruction to the chosen twelve we may discern the original teaching of the Nazarene: "Go . . . to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go preach, saying The Kingdom is at hand." That is substantially the Nazarene's whole message. Then follow the "signs of an apostle" as Paul described them: "Heal the sick, raise the dead, . . . cleanse the lepers, cast out devils. . . ." "When they deliver you up be not anxious what ye speak, . . . for it is not ye that speak but the Spirit of the Father that speaketh in you.[34] Here, we observe, Jesus enjoins upon the disciples that they execute the very "wonders" which He Himself at first refused to undertake on entering His ministry when tempted by the devil. But now that the doctrine of baptism into the Holy Spirit as preached at first alone by Paul has become also

[32] II Cor. xii: 12.
[33] Matt. x: 2–15.
[34] Matt. x: 19.

the doctrine of the converted apostles, the writers of the Gospels put it into the mouth of Jesus as having been preached by Him.

Then follows soon after an incident which, it seems to me, proves that the doctrine of the Holy Ghost was an innovation and at first was not willingly received. When the Jews taunt Jesus with casting out devils by the instrumentality of Satan, He insists that it is accomplished not by Satan but by the Spirit of God. And that Jesus may be represented as angrily denouncing any faction that insinuates the contrary opinion, He is made to regard it as the greatest of all sins. "Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men." [35] And that it may be made apparent that this doctrine or belief in the agency of the Holy Spirit is the supreme doctrine in all the teachings of Jesus, these additional words are put into His mouth: "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

Why, may we ask, was this doctrine so strenuously emphasized? It had not yet assumed such importance in any of the deliverances of Jesus. Moreover it has the appearance of an interpolation. Note the reading. He has just been condemning the Pharisees for insinuating that Satan was the source of His miraculous powers. He insists that it is the Spirit of God. Verse 30, following, reads: "He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad." Now verse 33, as if continuing the thought in verse 30, reads: "Either make the tree good and his fruit good or else make the tree corrupt; for the tree is known by its fruit." But between verse 30 and verse 33 are introduced the verses relative to blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Manifestly the

[35] Matt. xii: 31–33.

thought between the separated verses is sharply displaced; the metaphor is spoiled. If you do not gather the fruit with me, He is saying, you scatter it abroad (v. 30). If you can't make the tree and its fruit good, then corrupt it, He continues in verse 33. Clearly these two disjoined verses contain the same thought and should not have been separated for the introduction of the intervening verses relative to the Holy Ghost. As I say, it has the appearance of an interpolation.

However, why this stern and resentful insistence on the doctrine of the supremacy of the Holy Ghost; why is disbelief in the Holy Ghost made to appear the worst of blasphemies and sins? What other answer can be given, logically, but that belief in the magical efficacy of the Holy Ghost must be regarded as an innovation in the original teachings of the Nazarene and on that account it is introduced with such extraordinary emphasis.

Likewise, we must recall that in the early years of Christianity, there was a great dispute as to the efficacy and authenticity of the doctrine of the Holy Ghost. Even as late as the Nicean Council (325 A. D.) the doctrine was not fully accepted. "It is only adverted to in very general terms in the Nicene creed" (Neander). Basil the Great says that they who acknowledged the divinity of the Spirit in his day were condemned as introducing novel dogmas." [a] The first council that finally accepted the dogma of the Holy Ghost, was that of Alexandria, 362 A. D. So late then as the latter half of the fourth century there was a general dispute regarding the dogma. Hence it does not seem to be at all unlikely that the above verses in the Gospels regarding blasphemy against the Holy Spirit may be an interpolation, inserted by some monk, unless, indeed, the Gospels themselves were not written until the Church had ultimately settled the discussion and accepted the dogma.

Whatever may be the truth as to that problem, we never-

[a] *Church of First Three Centuries*, Lamson, p. 339.

theless may discern in the Gospel itself the gradual introduction of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, consequent, presumptively, on the preachment of St. Paul, who claims priority of his gospel over all other both in time and authority.

The point I am stressing is that the original Nazarene or Jewish Messiah, who preached or taught before Paul's usurpation, sought only to proclaim the gospel of repentance and regeneration for those who would enter the kingdom of God. His preaching was identical with that of John the Baptist, and a variant of the school of the prophets. This was the doctrine of the Nazarenes, and of the original college of the apostles at Jerusalem, of which James and Peter were the head, as the Apostle to the Gentiles admits. But when the latter came among them, after he had been preaching his own gospel for some fourteen or seventeen years, he succeeded in imposing on them a wholly new doctrine which insisted not on the fulfillment of the law and seeking first "the kingdom of God and its righteousness," but in "putting on Christ" and seeking "justification by faith." [37]

VIII

This interpretation seems to be corroborated by the epistle attributed to James, "the brother of the Lord" and head of the church at Jerusalem, which, of course, was the church founded on the teachings of the original Nazarene. In all that letter there is no reference to the doctrine of baptism into the Holy Ghost or enduement of power to execute miracles; and Paul's doctrine of "justification by faith" is directly

[37] A writer in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* animadverts on this subject, but very briefly. He says: "It is interesting to observe that the call for repentance which was manifested in Essene circles by bathing in water is voiced in the Synoptic Gospels and throughout Judaic Christianity; but in the fourth Gospel and throughout the Pauline writings repentance is superceded by rebirth in faith."

opposed by the gospel of good deeds. "What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? Can that faith save him?" [38]

Contrast this with Paul's "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified; . . . for all have sinned, being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ, whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith, by his blood." [39]

This is in no sense the teaching of the early Nazarenes as shown by James's clear definition of what is the essence of true religion. "Pure religion, and undefiled, before our God and the Father," he says, "is to visit the fatherless and widows, and keep one's self unspotted from the world." In short, repentance, good works and undefiled or pure lives are the substance of the teachings of the primitive followers of the Jesus of whom Paul apparently heard only vaguely when as a Jew he was persecuting heretics.

Therefore, the Gospels, which are now extant, having been written after the subjugation of the orginal Jesuans or Nazarenes by Paul, have left but minor traces of the primitive doctrine of repentance in the Synoptics, while it is totally absent from the fourth Gospel, written much later. By a careful study of this fact we are able to detect the vestigial passages indicative of the Nazarene's teachings and the superimposed passages which indicate the innovation of Paul's "revelation."

The substance of Paul's theology is salvation through faith in the shed blood of Christ, baptism into the Holy Ghost, and enduement with power to achieve "mighty works" (magical healing or miracles). The substance of the teaching of Jesus, the Nazarene was "Repent," seek the kingdom of God through right living (righteousness). ("Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.") Here is no hint

[38] Jas. ii: 14.
[39] Rom. iii: 24–25.

of justification by faith, waiting for a Pentecostal baptism or of the gift of miraculous powers. But as the innovation of the Pauline indoctrination develops in the Gospel narratives we find intimations of the latter doctrine mingled with the primitive and simpler ethical inculcations. Thus Jesus in giving instruction to the twelve, as I have already remarked, while ordering them to announce the call to repentance and the invitation to the kingdom "which is at hand," also is pictured as "giving them authority over unclean spirits and to heal all manner of sickness or disease."

It is the latter injunction which undoubtedly indicates the Paulinian influence. For Paul insists that the sign of an apostle is to do many "mighty works."

Paul's clear insistence is, I repeat, that an apostle can be known only by a demonstration of his power to do these "mighty works." In II Cor. xii: 11, in justification of his apostleship, he declares: "For in nothing was I behind the very chiefest apostles." Evidently a faction had disputed this and he confounds them by reference to the "signs of an apostle" which he had vouchsafed them.[40]

But He who ordained the apostles, the Master Nazarene Himself, in the first output of his deliverances, as recorded in the sections of the Gospels which seem yet unaffected by the Pauline influence, lays no stress upon such "signs of an apostle."[41] Let us observe how closely these first deliverances of Jesus merely echo the old Judaic doctrine of "repentance" as voiced by the rabbis of his own time and by the ancient prophets.

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[40] "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and wonders and mighty works." The marginal reading in the Revised Version substitutes "powers" for "works." That is, it was the manifestation of his miraculous or supernatural "powers" which he offers as proof of his true apostleship.

[41] "Importance is to be attached to the remarkable fact . . . that the Gospels preserved an old tradition according to which He positively refused to work any sign and declared that no sign should be given to His generation, except the sign of Jonah, *by which he clearly meant the preaching of repentance*" (*Prophet of Nazareth*, Schmidt, p. 238).

John the Baptist, introducing Him, had said merely "repent ye." ("John came, who baptized in the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins." [42] Jesus requested this same baptism that "all righteousness (demands of the Mosaic law) might be fulfilled." Here, observe, the remission of sins is acquired only by baptism. There is no reference to remission of sins through faith in the sacrificed blood of a redeemer. The latter is Paul's doctrine exclusively: and there is no intimation of it in the first sayings of John or Jesus. Their programme distinctively consisted only of the ancient Jewish teaching; just as baptism in water for purification was eminently demanded in the teachings of the Essenes.

Hence Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount (which throughout is markedly an echo of the higher spiritual teachings of the rabbis) "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets." [43] To realize how true this is (when limited to John's doctrine of repentance) read what Hosea and Jeremiah and Isaiah had already said: "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return [repent] unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him." [44] "O Israel, return [repent] unto the Lord; say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously." [45] As says one Hebrew authority: "In Biblical times as well as in post-Biblical literature, repentance is postulated as the indispensable condition on which the salvation and redemption of Israel, as well as of every individual, depends."

This was the manifest substance of the message of John, corroborated by the primitive message of the Nazarene Jesus. The Nazarene, like the old prophets, insisted on repentance by all. In the eye of God no man is good; all are sinners. "Why callest thou me good?" he asks. "There is none good but One,

[42] Mark i: 4.
[43] Matt. v: 17.
[44] Isa. lv: 7.
[45] Hos. xiv: 2.

even God."[46] This is an exact echo or articulation of the strain that runs all through the ancient prophetic utterances. "There is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not."[47]

Once more, the Galilean demanded not only repentance but reconciliation and restitution; the fruits of repentance. "If thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, . . . and first be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift."[48] This again is a precise echo of the ancient law.[49] In all the teaching regarding repentance there is not the slightest difference between that of Jesus and the Mosaic code and the interpretation of the prophets. "Offenses against man require in addition to confession and sacrifice, restitution in full of whatever has been wrongfully obtained or withheld from one's fellow man."[50]

Without enumerating further details it is apparent that in these earlier dicta or commands of Jesus, His voice is but an echo of the voice of the past; His purpose is to outline a programme of ethical action; His teachings are void of mysticism. Such primitive sayings constitute the lower stratum of His message; but in the Gospels, as we now have them, these have been overlaid by an upper stratum of Paulinian mysticism. For these Gospels were not composed, as I have repeatedly reminded the reader, till many decades or generations after the Epistles of Paul had been released to the world.

To realize this fact, note, how after John, on the banks of the Jordan, had just insisted that repentance was the all essential for "the remission of sins," there speedily follows a modification of the teaching by demanding "faith" in a mystical symbol as an additional requisite. For directly he

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[46] Matt. xix: 17.
[47] Eccl. vii: 20.
[48] Matt. v: 23–24.
[49] Lev. v: 16.
[50] See *Jewish Encyclopedia*.

has demanded that all shall repent and be baptized in water, he is made to exclaim: "One cometh after me, . . . I baptize you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost."

The remission of sins through repentance and purification by baptism in water was the established Jewish usage; this was all that John or Jesus, at first, insisted upon; Jesus himself in submitting to baptism by John does not intimate that He regards it as less than all sufficient. "Suffer it, to fulfil all righteousness" (that is the full demand of the law), he says. Thus far Jesus, the Nazarene, speaks.

IX

But, as I shall now show, Paul substituted the "baptism in the Holy Ghost" for baptism in water. "Have ye received the Holy Ghost," he asks the Ephesians. He almost scorns water-baptism. "I thank God that I baptized none of you" (with two or three exceptions); for Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the gospel."[51] Thus we see in Paul's view not only repentance becomes a minor requisite in order to salvation, but baptism, the symbol of purification, also. For his insistence is not on baptism with water (self-purification through repentance) but on faith in a mystical inoculation (enswathement of the Holy Ghost) which comes by virtue of the blood of Jesus shed as a "propitiation for our sins."

All this is palpably foreign to the primitive or original teaching of the Nazarene, or Jesus of Nazareth, but has been superimposed on the Gospel narratives which, as they now stand in the canon, were written under the dispensation of Paul's self-assumed apostleship.

Another situation, to be seriously considered, is the fact that accompanying or following the Pentecostal baptism, as narrated in The Acts, miraculous powers were bestowed upon

[51] I Cor. i: 13, 14.

the suppliants. That is, the capacity to perform miraculous healing and other acts in defiance of natural law seems to be the immediate gift of the Holy Ghost. Paul, as I have already stated, emphatically stresses the fact that only by such signs and wonders or "mighty works" can an apostle be recognized. He boasts of his especial endowment in respect to this supernatural capacity and insists he is himself, in that regard, equal to the chiefest of the apostles.

We have ample proof that those who went out as missionaries for the Nazarenes among the Jews of the Dispersion had never heard of the Holy Ghost. This is clearly revealed by several incidents in The Acts, to which we shall shortly return. Therefore originally the disciples did not perform miracles through the agency of the Holy Ghost, nor did Jesus the Nazarene. But when Paul invades and conquers the disciples he forces upon them the doctrine of Pentecostal baptism and the alleged power endued by the Holy Ghost to achieve miraculous deeds.

Hence, I repeat, we see the reason why Jesus is made in the Gospels to denounce and curse those who disbelieve in the Holy Ghost. Hence also by the time that The Acts is written, long after Paul had completely subjugated and absorbed the original followers of the Nazarene, we are introduced to a most dramatic scene. There are gathered together people from all the then known quarters of the globe. They come to hear about and some to worship the Nazarene who has by now been proclaimed, under the teaching of Paul, to have been raised from the death suffered on the cross. However Jesus Himself is not present to attest His own resurrection. But in His stead the presence of the Holy Ghost is recognized and accordingly numerous miraculous deeds are achieved. The objective of Paul is now clearly revealed. The apostles must exhibit the signs of their apostleship by demonstrating the office of the Spirit in endowing them with the art of divine healing and magical powers. The authority of the Pauline doctrine is

now reconfirmed. Repentance for the remission of sins is superceded by faith in the blood of Jesus shed as a propitiation for our sins. And as evidence of the recognition of this doctrine by the heavenly Father, He sends down His Spirit to grant the gift of healing and the power to perform miraculous wonders.

Paul has completely converted the Nazarenes to the belief in the crucifixion and resurrection of their leader; to submission to the operation of the Holy Ghost; and to the demonstration of the work of the Spirit in the art of supernatural achievements.

From the hour that the new baptism was established there followed among the apostles a long series of miraculous healings, in repetition of the alleged healings of Jesus who is now called the Christ, after He has been transformed from the meek and lowly Nazarene into a supernatural being, the latchet of whose shoes John, the Baptist, is made to say he is unworthy to unloose.

As I have already said, the original Nazarene taught simply repentance and regeneration, symbolized by baptism in water. He, like John, acknowledged that it was sufficient to "fulfil all righteousness" (that is, the requirements of the law) for "the remission of sins," pursuant to the indoctrination of the ancient rabbis and prophets. But after Jesus became known as the Christ (a cognomen imposed on the Nazarene by Paul) he is made to adopt the doctrine of faith in the sacrificial blood of a redeemer as the essential requisite for "the remission of sins" (as seen at the Last Supper), and hence is represented in accordance with Paul's programme as going "about healing all manner of disease." This revolutionary doctrine is dramatically introduced by the scene on the banks of the Jordan when, after arising from its baptismal waters, the Holy Ghost, from whom the power of miraculous healing is derived, descends in the form of a dove upon the head of Jesus.

Thus, thereafter, throughout the Gospels as finally developed, the chief characteristic of Jesus and the apostles is represented as consisting not in preaching repentance but in the art of healing and the achievement of miracles, through the agency of the Holy Ghost as an attestation of their authority.

X

At this juncture in our study, we must enquire whence Paul derived his knowledge and practice of the art of supernatural healing and "mighty works" with its Pentecostal endowment? First, let us observe that such a doctrine was unacknowledged as an element of the ancient Jewish religion. It was discountenanced and never regarded as a valid claim to substantiate the authority of any religion.[52] When Paul exclaimed "the Jews look for a sign and the Greeks for wisdom" and refused to gratify either, he must have been talking sarcastically for, as I have frequently remarked, he was continually claiming to give "signs and wonders" as positive proof of his apostleship.

But now, when we recall what Philo informs us in his *Contemplative Life;* namely, that the Jewish monastic sect, which he denominated the Therapeutæ and was so named by him because they practiced this very art, we may discern a possible source from which Paul derived his inspiration. This was a pietistic sect, whose lives were given over to asceticism and ego-centric contemplation, that they might acquire mystical powers much like the monastic sects of Christendom in the Middle Ages.

We have already observed that Philo was an old man by the time Paul appears and that Philonian influence is very marked in the writings of Paul. So true is this that numerous quotations from the Epistles may be produced which di-

[52] See Rabbi Kohler's article on "Miracles" in the *Jewish Encyclopedia.*

rectly reflect, if they are not synonymous with, the terminology of Philo. For instance: "God . . . hath spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds, express image of his person, upholding all things by the word of his power." [53] Philo, before Paul, had already said: "For the Word of God is over all the universe and the oldest and most universal of all things created."

"Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." [54] This was also echoed by St. John, who speaks of Jesus as "the only begotten Son." Philo frequently speaks of the Logos as "the first-begotten of God" and "the most ancient son of God." Paul calls Christ "the express image of God"; Philo declares of the Logos, "the most ancient Word is the image of God." Paul declares it was through the Son "the worlds were made." Philo says: "The Word is the image of God by whom the whole world was created."

Paul says "For we behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, . . . crowned with glory and honor." [55] Philo says, speaking of the Logos: "The Divine Word which is above the Winged Cherubim, being itself the image of God." Paul says: "Jesus being in the form of God deemed it not grasping to be equal with God." [56] Philo says: "The Word is the one placed nearest to the only existing God, without separation or distance between them."

Many more such similar passages have been noted by students of Philo's works, which indicate the close relation existing between the theology of Philo and of Paul, the latter being in all probability a student and possible follower of the elder Jewish ascetic philosopher.

It may indeed not be an extravagant conclusion to draw from this spiritual relation between them, that possibly it

[53] Heb. i: 1–3.
[54] Heb. v: 5.
[55] Heb. ii: 9.
[56] Phil. ii: 6–8.

may have been the perusal and study of Philo's works which drove Paul into the wilderness of Arabia in search of the contemplative life and the monasteries of the Therapeutæ. As Philo had so minutely described the daily life and profound religious habits of this occult Jewish sect, it would be almost natural that Paul, seeking retirement, that he might in the silence of a cell hope to understand the deep spiritual convulsion which had overtaken him, would search out such an abode. Else, why did he sojourn so long in the desert wilds, totally estrange himself from the outside world, and communicate not a word to those with whom he had formerly associated? Those three years are absolutely lost to history except to record the absence and utter silence of the future founder of the Christian faith.

But the great event in the career of Paul was not his temporary retirement, which must have been spent in contemplative preparation for his courageous and tempestuous programme, but his return from Arabia and his resolution to found a church on the basis of the thrilling discovery he had meanwhile made; namely, "THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS." He comes forth with the resolution to divulge this great mystery regarding which he asserts that "the whole creation groaneth," to all mankind. He throws himself into the arena of conflict with boundless enthusiasm. But he soon learns to his consternation (while engaged in attempting to convert Jews wherever he could, no less than Gentiles, to whom finally he devotes himself almost exclusively) that there already exists a sect whose members claim to be followers of the Messiah but preach a gospel different than His own. He storms angrily against them.

He cries out to the Galatians, almost tearfully: "I marvel that ye are so quickly *removing* from him that called you in the grace of Christ, unto a *different gospel;* which is not another gospel; only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." To his horror he finds that

after he had converted the Galatians to his individual gospel there should be found others converting them to one that is not the gospel of his Christ, but have come to them in the name of the Nazarene.

He learns that the substance of the teachings of these "false apostles" is the call back to the bondage of the old law, and that, in the name of a leader who rivals his Christ! "Now that ye have come to know God, or rather to be known of God how *turn ye back again* to the weak and beggarly elements, whereto ye desire to be in bondage again."

He cries out, almost as if in despair to these Galatians, "So, then, I am become your enemy, because I tell you the truth. They (the "false apostles") zealously seek you in no good way; nay, they desire to shut you out, that ye may seek them." What could more clearly reveal the fact that these "false apostles" are the so-called Judaizers, the original followers of the Galilean Teacher who, in His Name, have told the Galatians that the gospel Paul is preaching is not "true," for their Teacher acknowledged the law and obeyed it, while Paul does not? What wonder he cries out pathetically, "My little children . . . I am perplexed about you." These "false prophets" had been informing the Galatians that they must yield to the law and be "circumcized." They were obedient to the rule of the Church at Jerusalem, in its early stages, before Paul's subsequent invasion. That Church in substance taught the Gospel of St. James, the alleged brother of the Nazarene. This was the gospel of "works" which insisted that "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point (or rite) he is become guilty of all"; which was addressed not to "the churches which are in Christ" as Paul does, but refers to the *synagogues* where the communicants met.[57] "Ye see that by works a man is justified and not only by faith," James writes, as if directly scouting Paul's utterance, "that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not

[57] James ii: 2.

by the works of the law, because by the works of the law shall no man be justified.'' [58]

At last Paul grows so defiant, so determined to stop the mouths of those preachers of obedience to the ceremonial law among the followers of the Messianic leader, that he exclaims: ''Behold I Paul say unto you that if ye receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing.'' [59] As much as to say, ''Yield to these Judaizing followers of an alleged Messiah, and become circumcized and you will lose the offerings of Christ.'' He becomes so impatient with the Judaizing Nazarenes, he wishes they would lacerate themselves that they could speak no more. (''I would that they which unsettle you, would even cut themselves off.'' [60] Which may mean either mutilate themselves or commit suicide.[61]

Finally he writes to Timothy, begging him to tarry at Ephesus to ''charge certain men not to preach a different doctrine; . . . desiring to be teachers of the law though they understand not whereof they confidently affirm.''

Then he commits to Timothy the sad confidence that ''all that are in Asia turned away from me.'' [62]

It is evident that for years Paul is sorely tried by those who were ''spying on his liberty'' (that is, his liberty to preach his independent gospel, which differed so essentially from that of the original Nazarene).

Indeed, as far as we can read between the lines, it would seem that the chief burden of Paul's distress is that his opponents take special umbrage at the personality he introduces to them by the name of Jesus. It is into this ''name'' we read in The Acts [63] that Paul baptized the Ephesians, they apparently having not before known the Messiah by that name.

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[58] Gal. ii: 16.
[59] Gal. v: 2.
[60] Gal. v: 12.
[61] See Bloomfield's Greek Testament *in loc.*
[62] II Tim. i: 15.
[63] Acts xix: 5.

In his letter to the Corinthians he reveals the spiritual efficacy of this "name," by declaring, "Henceforth I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." It is the calling upon this name that effects the sanctification of those whom he has caused to believe.[64] He rejoices that he has baptized but few of his converts lest the act should be misunderstood as baptizing them in his own (Paul's) name.[65] It is the name, that is, the magical name of Jesus, by which to conjure, which alone must be acclaimed. It is alone to the "name of Jesus that every knee should bow"; whom "God highly exalted and gave a name which is above every name."[66]

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[64] I Cor. i: 2.

[65] I Cor. i: 15.

[66] Phil. ii: 9. It is not at all impossible that the name JESUS suggested itself to Paul as an earthly cognomen for that occult and archetypal Ideal which he worshipped and whose revelation to himself he believed was the source of his miraculous powers. It must not be forgotten that Paul's persistent corollary to his doctrine of the "crucifixion and resurrection" was that all believers in his form of faith would be endued with power to achieve "mighty works." The Jerusalem evangelists were originally void of this endowment and received it only at the Pentecostal baptism as narrated in The Acts. This momentous scene took place, of course, after Paul had convinced them that the humble Galilean Teacher was himself the Incarnate, whom Paul preached, who died and rose on the third day from the grave. Paul being a Greek in language and philosophy, howbeit of Jewish extraction, realizing that the healing power came through faith in this sublime being, must have sought some name by which to designate him. The Greek word for healing is "iasis" (*'ιασις*) from "iasthai" (*'ιασθαι*). The Ionic form of the word for healing was *'ιησισ*, phonetically much like *'ιησουσ*. It is admitted that Iesous is a derivative from *iasis* (*'ιασις*) or *iasthai* (*'ιασθαι*). Iesous (*'ιησους*) and iasis (*'ιασις* or *'ιησισ*) phonetically are almost identical. True the Hebrew origin of the common Jewish name Jesus is supposed to be derived from Joshua or Jehoshua. But to Paul healing was a magical art. Iasis (*'ιασις*) was to him a divine endowment. To his imaginative mind therefore iasis (*'ιασις* or *'ιησισ*) would easily suggest Iesous (*'ιησους*), the healer, as indeed he is called by the Evangelists—the physician. In an age when mystical powers were personalized this would be natural. There was also a goddess of healing whose name was *'ιασω* or *'ιησω*.

If this etymological origin of the name Jesus occurred to Paul instinctively, it must indeed have amazed him to hear of "another Jesus" whose followers were preaching "another gospel." His Iesous (*iasis*) was the magical Healer, while the other Jesus was merely a reformer or moral agitator. What wonder he exclaimed "Let him be anathema who preaches another Jesus than the Jesus of MY GOSPEL."

Yet the emphasis of the name, indicative of one who died on the cross, becomes a cause of contention among them;[67] and because they think it a piece of folly to adore such a name, they shall perish. Others again apparently among his own converts (whether Jewish or Gentile) pronounce the name a curse.[68]

They even, apparently, insinuate that no such person as this Jesus of Paul ever existed, which he corrects by declaring emphatically that he himself has seen the hero he proclaims.[69]

However, it would appear that some refused to accept this Jesus of Paul as identical with the Galilean Teacher. For he enjoins the Corinthians to be lenient even with them.[70]

What could Paul mean by stating that some come among his converts preaching "a different Jesus." Must we not understand from this that Paul means they refuse to accept the Jesus whom he declares he himself "saw," because the Jesus (or master) whom they had been persuaded to follow was altogether different in personality and doctrine from Paul's? Whether this "different Jesus" to whom he refers means the teacher from Galilee, or merely a name by which to conjure, as Paul conjured by the name of his Jesus, it is difficult to determine. The fact, however, that some did come declaring the authority of a "different Jesus" from Paul's, would seem to imply that the objection to Paul's Jesus lay in the subject matter of his doctrine and, possibly, in the nature of his hero's personality.

For on the latter point Paul seeks to make it very clear that he is exalting the name of one who is in no way merely a

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Of course the Gospel narratives make it appear that the apostles performed healing miracles and magical works before the advent of Paul. But we must always remember that the Gospels were written after Paul's Epistles and were made to fit into his scheme of things.

[67] I Cor. i: 18.
[68] I Cor. xii: 3.
[69] I Cor. ix: 1.
[70] II Cor. xi: 4.

human personality. In Philippians he even sets forth the manner of His generation and the supreme quality of His divinity. For he insists that his Jesus existed primarily "in the form of God"; that He counted himself equal with God, and yet He assumed the form of a servant and revealed himself on earth as a common mortal ("in the likeness of men"). Nor did He hesitate to humble Himself to such extent that He accepted the condemnation and death of the cross. The "different Jesus" then, that any could contend for against this Jesus of Paul, must, of course, have had nothing in common with the latter's characteristics. The "different Jesus" could not then have been regarded as a god-man, as one who achieved the virtue of a vicarious sacrifice on the cross or who after His death arose from the grave.

Paul's expressions are very fragmentary and cryptic, yet they seem to reveal enough to indicate that he introduced among the converts of the Nazarene and his own Gentile converts a Jesus who cannot be identified with the Man of Nazareth whom the latter's followers believed to be the Messiah.

The usual interpretation of the objective or purpose of the Judaizers, to whom Paul makes such frequent reference, seems to me not to be sufficiently fundamental or comprehensive. It is asserted that their objection to Paul and his preaching lay only in his disavowal of loyalty to the ancient Mosaic code. Because he refused to honor the rite of circumcision, it is contended, he brought upon himself the antagonism and hatred of the so-called Judaizers.

"The earliest division of the Christian Church into opposing parties was caused by the Judaizing teachers; . . . their great object was to turn the newly converted Christians into Jewish proselytes, who should differ from other Jews only in the recognition of Jesus as the Messiah. In their view, the natural posterity of Abraham was still as much as ever a theocratic nation, entitled to God's exclusive favor, to which the

rest of mankind could only be admitted by becoming Jews.''[71]

Again say the same authors: ''They taught that the uncircumcised . . . were at a greater distance from God . . . in short they kept the Gentile converts who would not submit to circumcision on the same footing as the *proselytes at the gate,* and treated the circumcised only as *proselytes of righteousness* (p. 365).

We have already shown how this by no means could have been the fundamental and only divisive objection of the Judaizers. We must recall that these objectors, as already stated, are not orthodox Jews, but such Jews as had originally been followers of the Nazarene; that is Jews who believed that the Galilean was the true Messiah. The fact that they oppose Paul's Jesus and what doctrines Paul preached in his name, is *prima facie* evidence that the Messiah had not given His sanction to such doctrines. For if He had, His own followers could in no sense have objected. This proves, indeed, that Paul's teaching was revolutionary and wholly in contradiction of what the Galilean or Nazarene had taught. Paul to them was the heretic. But on Paul's own confession his supreme and absolute contention was not merely that circumcision was unnecessary to the convert who attained salvation, but that the Jesus whom he preached, to whom the Judaizers presumably opposed a ''different Jesus,'' was a god-man, who Himself was the equal of God, and who came down on earth in human flesh and died and rose again from the grave for the salvation of all mankind.

Here were two diametrically contrasted or opposed Jesuses; both of them could not have been the Jesus whom the Jews could accept; the one whom Paul preached they apparently had not heard of until the Jerusalem church received the overtures which Paul made in His name. The great objection, then, of these Judaizers could not have been merely because Paul rejected circumcision but rather that he was introducing

[71] *Life and Epistles of St. Paul,* Conybeare and Howson, p. 364.

a new Jesus and a wholly novel and revolutionary doctrine concerning Him.

These Judaizers who had known the Galilean, or their descendants, had not received the tradition of the crucifixion and resurrection (Paul's personal and divisive teaching); this doctrine to them was not only new but wholly subversive of the teachings of their master; rejection of the rite of circumcision was merely incidental; the great objection was to that type of a leader or savior who was presented to them as an incarnation of the deity and characterized with what was then well known as pagan and idolatrous attributes. Here, indeed, was a far more serious and dangerous heresy than that of uncircumcision.

It is true, if we follow the story of Paul's conflict with the original followers of the Nazarene in The Acts (which, however, so often conflicts with Paul's own statements) it would appear (as was perhaps intended by the author) that the chief bone of contention was that of circumcision. In that book we read of the conflict between Peter and Paul at Antioch where the former is utterly routed and made subservient to the Pauline party. It is there that Paul denounces Peter as a hypocrite and a traitor.

But in Paul's Epistles we read of the real bone of contention. Here we learn that he was overwhelmed with amazement that there had been churches of Judea in Christ, as he calls them, where a "different Jesus" had been preached, before he had begun his evangelization in the name of his Jesus. These churches were founded by the Nazarenes, the missionaries sent abroad by the first organization in the name of the Messiah, who had been wholly uninformed concerning Paul's new doctrine. When Paul enters the field, which they had preempted, and undertakes to establish his revolutionary doctrine, they "spy on him," they attack and annoy him, they denounce his effort to introduce among them one whom he calls the Lord, even Jesus Christ. Paul in his heated reply to them cries:

"The word is right, . . . the word of faith which *we* preach" (that is, which I, Paul, preach). "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth *Jesus as Lord* and shalt believe in thy heart that God *raised him from the dead,* thou shalt be saved.[72]

There is the bone of contention: "That God raised him from the dead"! This is the new doctrine the Judaizers rave about. He is a false and paganized teacher!

He continues: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord (that is, on the name of the Jesus whom Paul is preaching) shall be saved. How then," he exclaims, "shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe on him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher, except he be sent?"[73]

Now, what can this mean but that until Paul proclaimed Him they had not yet heard of this Lord? That Paul was the preacher who was sent to preach this Lord and reveal Him to them? He is the first to proclaim Him; he is the true and only revealer of His name! Language could scarcely be clearer than Paul's own words, to the effect that his Jesus is not the same as the Messiah whom the Judaizers honored, but One who came to him by "revelation." "For I make known unto you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation from Jesus Christ. . . . Though an angel from heaven preach unto you any other gospel than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema"[74] (that is, let him be damned).

So wrought up is he that he flings his challenge in the face of the world and exclaims: "Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus." That is, I have taught you that Jesus was crucified and rose again from the grave and bore upon His body the marks of the

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[72] Romans x: 8, 9, 10.
[73] Rom. x: 13, 14, 15.
[74] Gal. ch. i.

cross; but you will not believe me and persecute me because of this doctrine, and I am willing therefore to bear the same marks on my body.

XI

It requires but slight imagination to read between the lines of Paul's recital in Galatians to picture to ourselves what occurred during Paul's second visitation at Jerusalem. "Why have you not been circumcising your converts," asked the apostles! "Why have you not adhered to the teachings of our Master, the prophet of Nazareth?" Paul, of course, retorts: "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision"; but apparently the Judaizers were unsatisfied with his argument. They grow indignant and insist that as he has brought a Greek convert, Titus, with him, he must be circumcised before he will be taken into fellowship. But Paul refused to yield to their demand and venturing a novel exegesis he cries: "The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel before hand unto Abraham, saying 'In thee shall all nations be blessed.' Know therefore, that they which be of the faith, the same are the sons of Abraham."

Thus after a long conflict he comes off victorious. He rejoices to tell the Galatians, "Not even Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised" in spite of "the false brethren" (doubtless the emissaries who had been annoying him among his converts in Asia Minor) who were brought in privily to spy on him in the exercise of his liberty.

Nevertheless, despite Paul's revolutionary teaching and the strenuous opposition he encountered, he came forth gloriously triumphant; proudly he recites the incident to the Galatians and exults in his victory: "To whom we gave place in the way of subjection, no; not for an hour!" We may imagine

the glow in his eyes as he writes these lines. But why did he come forth triumphant? Because he had convinced them that his gospel had gathered such tremendous force throughout his own field that they realized he was a dangerous rival with whom, in spite of their fears, they must make peace. ("When they saw that I had been intrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, and perceived the grace that was given unto me" (that is, that his gospel had been graced with such abundant success) "they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship.") [75]

Paul himself has revealed to us the stupendous revolution which he consummated among the original followers of the Nazarene, the preacher of "repentance and regeneration," as the only essentials for "the remission of sins." The Master had taught only repentance and the fulfillment of the law. This doctrine was followed by His own disciples and their converts, who had established the first congregation at Jerusalem. But about twenty-five or thirty years after its foundation Paul enters. From that hour the Nazarene is secondary and Paul becomes supreme. The Gospels which were written many, many years after the Pauline triumph, are to be so shaped that they will cause the teachings of the Galilean or the Nazarene to be submerged under the gospel of Paul, and only by the most careful analysis shall future generations be able to distinguish between them. Whatever may have been the actual facts in the life of the Nazarene, whatever may have been His real teachings and sayings, will be so buried under or commingled with the subsequent teachings of the Apostle to the Gentiles that the latter's will seem to be the message of the former; the narratives purporting to have been written by the Nazarene Apostles will be made to harmonize or dovetail with the "revelation" Paul claimed to have received on the desert plains of Arabia.

I repeat: after a careful study of Paul's Epistles it seems

[75] Gal. ii: 9.

to me conclusive that not until he returned the second time to Jerusalem from his missionary labors in Asia Minor and overpowered the elders of the Church of the Nazarenes by his irresistible personality, were they inoculated with his especial gospel, or doctrines. Before that, they, like John the Baptist and the Prophet of Nazareth, had preached merely repentance and baptism to enter the kingdom of God. They knew nothing of the baptism of the Holy Ghost; they knew nothing of a crucified and resurrected Savior, whose blood became the "propitiation for our sins"; they knew nothing of the attestation of their faith by "mighty works" or miracles.

The Nazarene said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law." Paul said: "The Law is bondage." The Nazarene said: "Thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the last farthing." Paul said: "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." [76] The Nazarene said: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (fulfillment of the laws of Moses). Paul said: "The righteous shall live by faith; and the law is not of faith." [77]

The Nazarene said: "Do the will of my Father which is in heaven, that men may see your good works." Paul said: "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ."

The Nazarene said to them that would claim "to do mighty works" (miracles) and cast out devils in His name that "they were workers of iniquity." Paul said he proved his apostleship not by his good works, but by his miracles.[78]

In the Sermon on the Mount, which must be accepted as the primary teachings of the Nazarene, before the Gospels represented them as complexioned with the mysticism of Paul, we find, as we have already observed, no reference whatever to miraculous healings or supernatural miracles. Yet these latter features are the distinctive characteristics of Paul's message.

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[76] Gal. ii: 16.
[77] Gal. iii: 12.
[78] Gal. iii: 5.

Paul persistently insists that his apostolic prerogative is attested by the miracles which he achieved through the Spirit.

During his sojourn in Arabia he seems to have imbibed the doctrines of the new inspiration, and thereafter with all the intensity of his ardent nature he expounded them as the one and only genuine gospel ("MY GOSPEL," as he called it), which he persistently claimed had come to him from no human source but exclusively by "revelation."

Remembering the intellectual, spiritual and religious influences that played upon Paul from infancy to manhood; first his rabbinistic training, then the theosophic and ascetic philosophy of Philo coupled with Hellenistic environment and knowledge of the mythological lore of prevalent paganism, we may fancy how there in the desert, silently and alone, the vague vision of a world religion dawned upon him. Following the bent of his pietistic but rebellious instincts, freed mentally from the bondage and narrowness of the ceremonialism of the faith of his fathers, this vision of a syncretism of pagan and Jewish, neoplatonic and cabalistic theology, flashed upon his mind and fired his spirit.

This was the reason, it would appear, why, when he felt fully confirmed in his revolutionary inspiration, Paul fought so persistently and defiantly for it. His discourses are all contentious arguments; with the evident feeling that the foe is always confronting him, and he must hold his ground inch by inch. But his fight was not against the "heathen," the Gentiles; he merely denounces, and warns them against, their idolatry, but with their refined occultism he seems himself to be intrigued. His warfare is chiefly with those of his coreligionists who were still inclined towards rabbinistic narrowness; or who having become followers of the Nazarene still yielded to the bondage of the law.

At length he despairs wholly of both the orthodox and Nazarene Jews, and casting his net into the waters of paganism

exclusively he hopes to haul it in filled with those who are susceptible to his syncretistic, mystical interpretations.

Upon both the liberalized Jews and the pietistic pagans he would seek to impose the formulæ of Greco-Hebraic occultism —like Philo, dreaming of grafting upon the ancient Jewish stock the mysticism of Alexandrian philosophy.

XII

Why are Paul's letters, especially I Corinthians and Galatians, couched in such bitterly controversial terms? Why did he feel called upon to make such an earnest defense of himself, howbeit he maintained a dignified sense of his superiority, before the original followers of the Nazarene on the basis of whose teachings they had already established the nucleus of the primitive church?

The burden of Paul's thought is that the old law is bondage, that the Jews must not possess a religion for their own exclusive enjoyment; that the Redeemer he, Paul, proclaimed, extended His overtures no less to Gentiles than to Jews.

All this is directly opposed to what Jesus of Nazareth taught.[79] He was not, according to His own proclamation, a world redeemer, but one who had come only to save backsliders and unregenerates among the Jews. Jesus never preached a single word to the Gentiles. He even scorned the Syrophœnicians and Canaanites and, only apologetically submitted to the appeal of one of their women who professed faith in Him. The Prophet of Nazareth, so far as we can discern His motives and instincts in the Gospels, was a circumcised and circumscribed Jew, whose whole world was within the circumference of the synagogue and Sanhedrin; and whose only insistence and persuasive message was to those in whose veins flowed the blood of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

[79] Matt. v: 18–20.

How bold, then, was Paul, to attempt in His Name to impose upon the Jewish disciples of the Teacher a series of doctrines, which were wholly outside the ancient tradition. Therefore, his citations of the ancient Scripture in support of his mission to the Gentiles are illogical and fatuous, for the prophecies therein which he emphasizes did not presume to foretell the conversion of Judaism to the occultism of the Gentiles, but the coming of all the nations from the ends of the earth unto the embrace of Judaism and Jehovah.

How then did Paul come to conceive of a religion which would combine all that was most appealing in ancient Judaism and in pagan philosophy and compose a syncretism which has ever since proved so compelling and convincing to countless multitudes?

Nothing, it seems to me, could be clearer than that, by Paul's own confession, he was not a follower of the Prophet of Nazareth and that the gospel which he proclaimed did not originate from that source. Mark these words: "Paul, an apostle (not from man, neither through a man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him up)."[80] Here he defiantly disclaims any authority for his message except his own. He does not refer to the Prophet of Nazareth or the Son of Man, but employs a title which was probably ascribed to Jesus by Himself. For, if the sponsors of Jesus who looked to prophecy for His proper name, had called him what was there foretold, as we have already contended, he would have been known as Immanuel, according to Isaiah. Instead of that they call him Jesus, but specify that he was to be known as a Nazarene.[81] Therefore the presumption is, of course, that He was thus described when He was first heard of. However, in the Gospels, as we now have them, which were written under Paul's influence or under the dispensation of Paul's gospel, he is called Jesus Christ, a title which runs throughout Paul's

[80] Gal. i: 1.
[81] Matt. ii: 23.

deliverances. He is never afterward known specifically as Jesus, the Nazarene, or Jesus of Nazareth.

Now when Paul first heard of the Man whom the Nazarenes were following he regarded Him merely as a heretic or sectarian, among the Jews. We have no record in any of his writings that he sought to be informed as to what was His message or the doctrine of this sect. Where will you find in the Epistles that Paul sought any knowledge of the newly hailed Messiah from His disciples? He himself describes the manner in which he became acquainted with the "revelation of Christ Jesus." First, positively asserting the fact that he is responsible to none for his faith, he says: "As touching the gospel which was preached by me, it is not *after man,* neither did I receive it from a man, NOR WAS I TAUGHT"; he proceeds to say, "beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age; being more exceedingly jealous for the tradition of my fathers."

Proceeding from this introduction, does he then say, as intimated in The Acts, that he was suddenly pricked in conscience and sought knowledge of this Jesus from some of His followers? No, indeed. On the contrary he asserts, "When it was the good pleasure of God, . . . to *reveal his Son in me,* that I might preach him among the Gentiles," etc.[82]

Here you have the whole story. His doctrine, or message which he calls his exclusive "gospel," bears no relation whatsoever to that of the Nazarene whom the apostles originally preached. For all he knew about that sect was that it was some sort of a heresy, opposed by the rulers of the synagogue, and he, being "zealous for the tradition of his fathers," proceeded forthwith, to "make havoc of it." He positively avouches that he knew nothing of its purport for he insists that never a mortal man told him what to preach, but Jesus Christ was "revealed" in him.

[82] Gal. i: 11–17.

Consequently he could have known nothing of the gospel preached by the Nazarene in Palestine, except only by way of hearsay. But if he tells the truth, even that hearsay was of little value to him, for he insists that the gospel which he preaches he did not receive from any man. The story, therefore, told in The Acts, that he stood by when Stephen preached and was stoned, cannot be true; or at least does not accord with his own testimony. For if he had listened to Stephen he would have known the general purport of the mission and message of the Master, as Stephen defined it.

It becomes evident that what is related to us concerning Paul in The Acts is merely a series of legends that grew up around the Apostle to the Gentiles in after ages. If Paul speaks the truth, their historical value is negligible. (It seems therefore conclusive that the Jesus Christ whom Paul presents to us in his Epistles is not the Prophet of Nazareth whom the first apostles proclaimed. As he distinctly asserts, on his oath ("Before God, I lie not") [83] it came to him as the outgrowth of a subconscious inspiration, that he would be separated from his people and preach a message unknown to the world. ("God who separated me even from my mother's womb, called me through his grace.") [84] The entire process was psychological—an inward experience, brought about by an irresistible urge he himself could not, apparently, understand. It was this convulsion, as I have said, the flash of a sudden realization of his mission, that drove him into the wilderness, where he could study out for himself the meaning and purport of the psychological experience. It was during his wilderness sojourn, supposedly or at least possibly in the cells of the Therapeutæ, as I have intimated, that he may have had impressed upon him the conception of a universal religion, a grand syncretism of all religions in which there is neither Greek nor Jew, Scythian nor barbarian. But what psychological influences were at work

[83] Gal. i: 20.
[84] Gal. i: 15.

with him to generate this result we must attempt further to study.

XIII

Perhaps we cannot solve this problem, namely: how Paul came to be obsessed by a religious conception so contradictory of that in which he had been educated in Jerusalem, unless we ponder the psychological effect of his earlier environment on his spiritual nature. Paul at heart, apparently, was really never a Jew in the purview of ancient orthodoxy. True, he says in his own defense against those who dispraise him, that he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He means by this, however, merely his racial lineage. Precisely so did Philo, his logical progenitor, speak of himself. Yet, it is universally admitted that Philo Judaeus was actually more a Greek than a Jew, in culture and mental equipment, despite his racial origin, as evidenced by the theosophic philosophy he expounded. They both are classed as Hellenists, the people of the Dispersion whose intellectual tendencies were directed as much if not more by the pagan philosophies of Alexandria and Hellas than they were by the teachings and traditions of the synagogue and Sanhedrin.

It is quite possible, therefore, that the Gentile milieu,[85] in which Paul's youthful and impressionable years were spent, had left a subconscious stratum underneath the protracted education he had received in the Jerusalem schools. He may therefore have been personally unaware of this psychological reservoir, from whose depths might leap forth, when tapped

[85] Paul's mental susceptibility to the reception of Greek and Oriental ideas, unconsciously absorbed from his environment, is well put by Dr. Glover, howbeit he refers only here to Paul's absorption of Stoic philosophy. He says: "Living in a world of popular lecturers who traveled from place to place and gave demonstrations or displays of their accomplishments in philosophy, criticism and style, Paul shared the inevitable atmosphere of his time and caught something of the language and with it something of the ideas" (*Saul of Tarsus,* p. 21).

by associative stimuli, spontaneous convictions he least expected. What he had heard and seen in Tarsus during his youthful years;[86] what snatches of pagan philosophy and religious inculcation he may have caught in the streets of his native city where priests openly proclaimed the oracles of Mithra and Dionysus, of Adonis and Attys, while later lost to his normal consciousness, nevertheless, lay there asleep in his unawakened self. Especially may this have been true of the ceremonies and ritualism of the sun-god Mithra whose cult was so prevalent in that famous city.

Tarsus, it appears, was a city of extraordinary culture in those days. "In the period which is that of Paul, we have the testimony of a native of this part of Asia Minor, Strabo, who says that in all that relates to philosophy and general education it was even more illustrious than either Athens or Alexandria. From his description it is evident that its main characteristic was that of a Greek city where the Greek language was spoken and the Greek literature studiously cultivated."[87]

Now it is a remarkable fact that the Mithraic religion, which was known to have penetrated from Persia into Europe, Asia Minor and even Palestine, bore such close resemblance to the doctrines of Paul as expressed in his Epistles that not a few authorities insist the latter were derived from the former. Even so orthodox an authority as McClintock and Strong's *Encyclopædia of Biblical Literature* admits that "in the early days of the Christian Church it was not an uncommon occurrence to find an apologist of the Inspired Teacher laying undue stress on some points of resemblance between Mithraism and Christianity, and thus *the triumphant march of the latter was*

[86] "Though we are not told at what age Paul left Tarsus and came to Jerusalem, the question is not without importance. That Greek was his native speech, says Wendland, is proved by his familiarity with the Septuagint. . . . Deissmann ably deduces from his being a man of the Septuagint a later date than childhood for his leaving Tarsus; he must have spent a good part of his youth, or at least his boyhood, there. . . . Greek then is his mother tongue and Greek—his milieu" (*Saul of Tarsus*, T. R. Glover, 1925, pp. 15, 16).

[87] *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, Conybeare and Howson, p. 32.

much retarded (italics mine). Some modern writers who refuse to accept the Christian religion as of divine origin, . . . have gone so far as to institute a close comparison between the Founder of Christianity and Mithra;[88] Dupuis and others, going even beyond this, have not hesitated to pronounce the gospel simply a branch of Mithraism."[89]

Now, it must not be forgotten that the resemblances here referred to, which are attributed to Jesus as the founder of Christianity, entered into the Gospels only after the usurpation of Paul and the imposition of his peculiar doctrines on the primitive followers of the Nazarene.

No such resemblances could be discerned between Mithraic doctrine and the teachings of that Jesus who merely echoed the precepts of the ancient prophets and whose insistent emphasis was on the necessity of repentance to enter the kingdom of God.

That there must have been a wide distinction between the teachings of this original expounder of the moral ideals of Judaism as opposed to synagogue-ceremonialism and those of Paul, is seen in the fact that Jesus and His disciples were permitted to teach and preach their gospel in the pulpits of the Jewish temples; whereas Paul, in his peregrinations, preached in the groups or churches which he himself established. He confesses he never entered the "churches of Judea which were in Christ," meaning, of course, those which had

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[88] Dr. Glover, who refuses to believe that Paul was an initiate in the mystery religions, admits, nevertheless, that "words and ideas are found common to Paul and the documents of the mystery religions" and quotes from Wendland, as follows: "The strong contrasts in Paul's piety, the dangerous antithesis of spirit and flesh, the tendency to asceticism, the inclination to hypostatize (personalize) or materialize spiritual functions and religious occurrences, the conception of mysteries and revelation, the picture of the world in stages or stories (*cf.* the third heaven), Paul's experience of the journey upward, his realistic representation of the higher types of spirits, and the servitude of men under their power, and of the battle against them, the yearning for redemption, broadening with Paul into cosmic significance—all these have analogies in purely heathen mysticism" (*Saul of Tarsus,* p. 135).

[89] Art. "Mithra."

been founded by the followers of the Nazarene or John the Baptist. He says none of these had seen his face or he was not known to them.[90] His own churches were, apparently, first organized in the homes of his converts.[91] This fact alone, as I have previously intimated, would indicate a wide divergence between the doctrines of the earliest churches of the Nazarenes and those of Paul. (It is true that in The Acts Paul is said to have gone in and out of the synagogues preaching to the Jews. But that is only one more proof of the inconsistencies between the writer of that book and Paul's epistles. They often contradict each other and cannot be reconciled.) [92]

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[90] Gal. i: 22.

[91] I Cor. xvi: 19; Rom. xvi: 5 and Col. iv: 15.

[92] "The author of The Acts has much to report of such visits to synagogues and is here certainly not incredible. If St. Paul had not worked within the organization of the synagogues how otherwise could the frequent punishments be explained which he had to suffer at the hands of the synagogue authorities? See II Cor. xi: 24" (*St. Paul, the Apostle*, Deissmann, p. 210).

It does not seem to me, however, that this statement is corroborated by the testimony of Paul. As I have shown, in his Epistles, Paul makes it plain that his meetings and those of his followers were held in private houses, whereas James speaks of the original followers of Jesus (the Nazarenes) as meeting in the synagogues. In the passage in Corinthians to which Deissmann refers, true, Paul says he was smitten five times with forty stripes by the Jews. But to which Jews is he referring, the orthodox, from whom he says he turned away to the Gentiles, or from the Nazarene Jews, the so-called Judaizers? That it was the latter about whom he is complaining in the Corinthian Epistle seems clear when we read through the eleventh chapter and note the connection of the statements. He is justifying himself against those who come preaching another Jesus, whom we did not preach, . . . a different gospel which he did not accept (xi: 4) . . . evidently the Judaizers from Jerusalem. Defending himself against their charges he declares "I reckon I am not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles (v: 5). Then he specifies in detail: They accuse him of being "rude in speech"; because he did not charge a stipend for his services on which account they accuse him of "abasing himself" (v. 7); he confesses that he did "take wages" from some churches that he might minister to the Corinthians without being a burden to them (v. 8, 9). Then he proceeds to make it very plain about whose persecutions he is complaining; it is such men as are "false prophets, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ" (v. 13). Certainly this can have no reference to the Jews of synagogue or Sanhedrin. Then, evidently referring to these same "false apostles in Christ," he proceeds: "Are they Hebrews? so am I; Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they of the seed of Abraham?" etc. Then he says he was beaten "five times of

Not until the doctrines of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, the divinity of Jesus and salvation through faith in the shed blood of the Redeemer, were prominently set forth, did the opposition of the Jewish priests arise. Even in the story as given in the Synoptic Gospels, which of course were written after the dispensation of Paul was established, this alleged claim of the divinity of Jesus was set forth rather by implication than by assertion. The accusation which the enemies of Jesus brought against Him before Pilate was that He claimed to be a King of the Jews and was therefore a traitor to the Roman Empire. He was not crucified because He claimed to be God, or the Son of God, as the inscriptions on his tomb clearly showed. The divinity and lordship of the Galilean was not positively declared until after His alleged resurrection. Peter at the first gathering of the apostles and the followers of Jesus positively declares this fact. "Let all the house of Israel, therefore, know assuredly that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, *this Jesus whom ye crucified.*" [93] Again

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the Jews with forty stripes" to distinguish it from the Gentile punishment he also received: "thrice was I beaten with rods," which as Bloomfield (Greek Testament *in loc.*) shows was a Roman punishment. It seems clear he is referring to the Jewish treatment according to the Deuteronomic law which he received at the hands of the Judaizers, "false apostles," and to the pagan punishments administered by Roman officers. But in none of his statements can we detect an insinuation that he "suffered at the hands of the synagogue authorities," as Deissmann insists.

James in his Epistle, which, remember, is addressed "to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion," makes it very clear that the Jewish followers of Jesus, whom missionaries from Jerusalem had converted in many lands, held their meetings in synagogues (Jas. ii: 2). But Paul nowhere intimates that he or any of his followers ever entered synagogues or preached in them. Indeed he distinctly asserts that he never did enter the synagogues of the Jewish Christians ("the churches of Judea in Christ,") for he says they had never seen his face (Gal. i: 22).

The fact that The Acts assert the frequent goings in and comings out of the synagogues by Paul is, therefore, very questionable, and wholly contradictory of Paul's own statements. The author of Acts, written probably several generations after Paul's subjugation of the Judaizers, apparently attempts a reconciliation between the Jewish and Gentile believers, by making it appear Paul made his converts no less within the Jewish synagogues than within the pagan temples.

[93] Acts ii: 36.

he says:[94] "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses." Manifestly these assertions of Peter must be taken as the first official announcement of the divinity and resurrection of Jesus. So plainly is it a deliverance based on the doctrines of Paul, that we need but read this book in connection with the writings of Paul to discern that almost the very language is that of the Apostle to the Gentiles, rather than that of the Peter who so timidly and dubiously followed the Nazarene. This fact is re-enforced by the marginal references in the Acts, written in by commentators. They are almost all references to Paul's Epistles. No appropriate references could be found in the Synoptics to sustain the deliverances of this first council.

If such a council had actually assembled, as stated in The Acts, then it is quite supposable that the doctrine of the resurrection and divinity of Jesus was there first asserted, if not, indeed, invented. For the story of the resurrection as told in the Gospels is apparently an addendum to the primitive narratives. As we have seen in previous chapters, Mark, in the earliest manuscript, wholly omits any reference to it. Matthew's account is inconsistent with Luke's, and John's description is a mere poem with several additions novel in character compared with the previous accounts.

Why, we must ask, should so stupendous and fundamental an event, in the purview of Paul's programme, have been so tentatively treated in the Gospel narratives, at first utterly unnoticed and gradually added to in successive accounts, unless the legend at the time the first account was written was yet unknown or in its nascent stage? Why was it found to be necessary to add the forgery of the last twelve verses in Mark, unless it was for the purpose of making it agree with later writings in which a declaration of the resurrection appears? Why were the other accounts mutually inconsistent and partially contradictory, unless that fact evinces

[94] Acts ii: 32.

the official invention and gradual expansion of a story which had not theretofore been heard of? If the resurrection was a fact, it is inconceivable, as I have previously contended, that the first account of the career of Jesus (Mark's) could have omitted all reference to it. If it was not invented, or taken over from the writings of Paul, then why was it so inconsistently reported by two of the Synoptists and so poetically and novelly related by the last of the Gospel (John's) narratives? In fact it may be shown that the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Ghost and the resurrection of Jesus as well as the other doctrines of Paul were entirely unknown even to the original followers of John the Baptist, whose missionaries were spread abroad in Asia Minor provinces. Let us examine this further.

XIV

Was John the Baptist or Jesus of Nazareth the first of the two to be acclaimed the Messiah? Certain suggestions in the Gospel narratives and the story of Paul in The Acts as well as in the writings of Paul divulge the possibility that those who afterwards became followers of the Nazarene had previously been convinced that John was the awaited Messiah. Therefore John the Baptist becomes a far more important character in Jewish annals than he seems to be in the narratives of the New Testament.

To begin with he is an actual historical character attested by profane historians. The passages in Josephus which refer to him are acknowledged to be genuine and trustworthy. Of course this cannot be said of Jesus of Nazareth; for He is exclusively a Gospel character, created wholly within the annals of the Gospel stories, and no profane voice of history has ever yet been heard in proof of His existence. It is needless here to review the alleged references in Josephus, Pliny, Suetonius, etc. All have been shown by critical investigators

to be either forgeries or references which do not apply to the Person we know as Jesus.[95]

But in John we actually touch the substance and verity of history. However, it is evident that the details of his life as recorded in the Gospel narratives are a legendary appendage to historical reality. The account recorded by Josephus in the *Antiquities* agrees with the Gospel legend to the extent of assuring us that John was "a good man who admonished the Jews to practice abstinence; to lead a life of righteousness toward each other and of piety toward God, and then to join him in washing (baptism) if they would use it, not simply for putting away certain sins, but for the sanctification of the body after the soul had beforehand been thoroughly purified by righteousness. The people flocked to him in crowds, being stirred by his addresses." Thus far the Josephus account quite agrees with the substance of the Gospel narrative. Josephus also says John was slain by Herod Antipas; the reason however given by this author for his assassination is quite different from that given in the Gospels; and here the legend begins to diverge from history. Josephus says Herod feared John would stir up a rebellion among the Jews and therefore had him slain.

From that point the subsequent Gospel account, especially in Luke, is manifestly manufactured to add solemnity to John's career and yet to demean him in comparison with Jesus, that the latter might conversely be the more magnified, as I have previously shown.

The dramatic story of Jesus is introduced with a prologue appertaining to John. Insomuch as no preliminary announcement is made of John the supposition is that he was already well known. But, again, as in the development of the Jesuan drama, John plays a very minor role, the question naturally

[95] For an incisive examination of all the alleged pagan evidence see *Diegeis*, Taylor, pp. 392–414. . . . For the conclusion of modern scholarship on this problem see *The Prophet of Nazareth*, N. Schmidt, ed. 1905, ch. viii.

arises why was he introduced at all? Why was it necessary to represent John as an important personage whose attestation of the claims of Jesus is made to appear essential in the career of the latter? We note in the Josephus account and in that of the Gospels that John's triumph over the masses was complete. "There followed him great multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis, and Jerusalem and Judaea and from beyond Jordan." Thus far we seem to be on firm historic grounds. But in the Gospel narrative a new feature is unexpectedly introduced.

We are told suddenly that John was not the anticipated Messiah. The question naturally suggests itself: Why did the Evangelists feel constrained to make so positive a denial of John's Messiahship? If there had not been a rumor vouching for the actual Messianic claim of John, either by himself or by others, would there have been any necessity at all for the emphatic denial? John the Baptist is manifestly introduced merely to make the Messianic claim of Jesus the stronger. While the details of the career of John are very meager in the sacred records, yet enough is related to place him in the proper category relative to the immediate claims of Jesus vouched for by His sponsors. Of course the purpose of the Gospels as we now have them was to prove emphatically that Jesus alone was the true Messiah, the Christ Jesus of Paul.

But other claimants to this office in those times had already frequently appeared. Indeed among the Jews there was a very intimate belief that the Messiah was about to appear. The thought was "in the air" as we say.

Judas of Galilee and Theudas had set up their audacious claims, secured a large following and paid the price of fanatic leadership. Historians intimate that there were many others. Now John, as indicated in a preceding passage, is to be classed in this category. He also met the call of the times and launched his career as a Messianic prophet. The apostles,

of course, do not admit this assumption in their narratives. On the contrary they go out of their way to assert positively that John is not so to be regarded. Nothing of his claim to the Messianic office is asserted in any of the Gospel accounts of John. However, as we read between the lines, we may perceive that in spite of contradiction the people would have it that John was in truth the expected Messiah. In fact, the evangelists unwittingly imply this.

For they put into John's mouth these very humiliating and self sacrificing words: "One cometh after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am unworthy to stoop down and unloose." Does not this look like a forced humiliation on John's part? Is he, whose career is so emphatically triumphant, not reduced into a too severe and undignified self-effacement?

The account of this incident in the Gospel according to St. John is even more suggestive than in the preceding ones. "When the Jews," he says, "went unto him from Jerusalem, priests and Levites, to ask him who art thou? And he confessed, I am not the Christ." (Had this text been written by a Jew it would have read "I am not the Messiah.") Persisting in his forced denial John the Baptist (in St. John's account) cries out: "This was he of whom I said, He that cometh after me is become before me."

However, in Luke's account we have a most beautiful expansion of the Johannine legend. Insomuch as John does not afterwards enter into any intimate association with Jesus, and his relation to the latter seems in no way essential, we cannot but wonder why Luke wrote such an extended and elaborate account of the preternatural birth of the Baptist, and made it appear that in some way the life of John was inwoven with that of Jesus. Mutual relation, however, abruptly ends and John is totally removed from the drama. Why, then, was any account of John mentioned, especially in so picturesque and conspicuous a manner? Perhaps Luke has unwittingly given us a hint of how we may solve the problem.

That author makes a seemingly incidental but a most important remark: "The people were in expectation; and all reasoned in their hearts concerning John whether haply he were the Christ?" (Messiah). There you have it: "In expectation." The sudden arrival of the Messiah being so commonly expected, whenever a great teacher appeared he was at once suspected of being the awaited One. It is easy to read into the lines of Luke's account that John the Baptist was so suspected. "They reasoned in their hearts whether he were not the Christ." The enormous following which John had acquired awakened the suspicion that he was the awaited One. Could such a suspicion be suppressed? Would not some assert it, at first timidly, and then with loud acclaim? Understanding the psychology of the mass mind it is readily seen how such an acclamation would have been most natural.

Was not the effort to overpower this popular acclaim of John as the Messiah the reason why the positive denial of the office was put in the mouth of John himself? Or, put in another way, do not the evangelists' denials in prejudice of John reveal the fact that a historical incident has been suppressed; that the people did originally acclaim John, but that something transpired which finally overwhelmed his candidacy for the Messiahship, and made him give way to another? Is it not possible, that after Paul had secured the mastery over the apostles and the disciples of Jesus, (some of whom nevertheless, as we shall see, continued to follow in the wake of John, despite the subsequent leadership of Jesus) that Paul's hero was substituted for that of the Johannites, and the supremacy and alleged primacy of Jesus acknowledged?

It was Paul, who brought out from the East a metaphysical Hero, whom he acclaimed as the Christ and who, intriguing John's original followers after the latter had been beheaded, was announced as "the very image of the substance

of God'' unto whom God said, ''Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.''

The canonical narratives, as we now have them (which we must always keep in mind did not appear till many decades after Paul's writings and after Paul had completely converted the official apostles appointed by the Nazarene to his own formula of ''the glad tidings''), set forth sufficient data to convince us that the claim of Messiahship was first made in behalf of John the Baptist, and almost universally acclaimed before it was transferred upon Jesus of Nazareth, by the *coup d'état* of Paul.

The latter was so determined to override all previous expectations concerning the one who was to be hailed as Christ that he impatiently cursed those who had the effrontery to disagree with him. ''Let him be accursed'' or damned, he cries, who accepts any other gospel than his own. I have already stated that Paul's vindictiveness was not ejaculated against all the Christianized Jews, but only against such as had accepted a gospel which proclaimed a Messiah, contrary to his own programme. Language respecting this could scarcely be stronger than that employed by the Apostle to the Gentiles. He marvels painfully that once having convinced his adherents that Jesus was the Christ they should so quickly desert him for ''a different gospel'' (Gal: i: 6); that even if an angel from heaven should preach to them any other gospel than what he had taught them let him be damned (''anathema''). Now all this, of course, was spoken against those known as ''Judaizers'' who were advocates of a Christ or Messiah whom Paul refused to recognize. Who then were those Judaizers against whom Paul so violently raved? Were they those who had previously acclaimed John the Baptist as the true Messiah or Savior?

It can, I think, be shown that Paul organized a faction among the Jews who had originally followed John as the acclaimed Messiah and sought to impose on them the claims

of his own hero, whom he called Jesus. This was the cause of the first schism among the followers of the Nazarene, and did not occur until Paul invaded the college of the apostles after he had been independently preaching his own gospel for fourteen or seventeen years.

The story, as represented at least in The Acts, clearly implies this deduction. It is narrated that Paul in his travels frequently encountered those so-called Judaizers, whom he freely denounced and who caused him a great deal of annoyance. They spied on him, as he confesses when he went up to Jerusalem to argue his case.[96] At Damascus he argued with and "confounded the Jews, proving that *this is the Christ*"[97] Who could these "Jews" have been against whom he argues to prove Jesus was the Messiah, if not the followers of one who claimed to be "the Christ" (Messiah) in opposition to Paul's "Christ"? Paul himself declares he despairs of speaking to orthodox Jews and devotes himself only to the Gentiles.[98] The orthodox Jews would, therefore, cease to be interested, and what "Jews" opposed Paul must have been those who were raising the standard of a "Christ" opposed to his own. These Judaizers forced Paul to compromise with Peter, who represented the primitive converts that insisted on obeying the law and grudgingly allowed Paul and Barnabas to preach "the gospel of uncircumcision."[99] It was these Judaizers or Christianized Jews who gave Paul all his most serious worry. They fought for the simple "gospel" of John; for the maintenance within the new Christian or Nazarene organization of the ritual of the ancient usages and ceremonialism, while still accepting the message of the Messiah. Hence, Paul was agonized on account of the stubbornness of those converted Jews, who were willing to accept the message of the Messiah, or Christ, as Paul denominated Him, yet

[96] Gal. ii: 4.
[97] Acts ix: 22.
[98] Acts xiii: 46.
[99] Gal. ii: 7.

unwilling to accept the gospel he had formulated. But when "they saw that Christianity (as outlined by Paul) instead of being the purest and holiest form of Judaism (on which John, the prophet-reformer had insisted) was rapidly becoming a universal and indiscriminating religion in which the Jewish element would be absorbed and lost" their anger knew no bounds.

"This revolution could not appear to them in any other light than as a rebellion against all that they had been taught to hold inviolably sacred. And since there was no doubt that the great instigator of this change of opinion was that Saul of Tarsus, whom they had once known as a young Pharisee at 'the feet of Gamaliel,' the contest took the form of an attack . . . upon Paul." [100] These Judaizers Paul himself calls "false brethren."

Nevertheless, we must admit that it is nowhere stated explicitly in the narrative of The Acts that these so-called Judaizers or false brethren were the original followers of the Baptist, yet by implication, at least, there are several incidents recorded which distinctly indicate such a probability.

The Pharisees, the ruling sect of the orthodox Jews, were ever in close affiliation with the "disciples of John." They had not found in His teachings or practices anything that offended them or caused their opposition to him. They fasted and ate together [101] and, apparently together conspired to undermine the authority of Jesus as the Supreme Teacher. They appear on frequent occasions to taunt the Galilean with vexatious questions.[102] John, whom the Pharisees honored, fasted and wore a gloomy and austere countenance; while the disciples of Jesus affiliated with gluttons and outcasts, attended dancing parties and bibulous weddings.[103] They em-

[100] *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, Conybeare and Howson, p. 182.
[101] Mark ii: 18.
[102] Matt. xix: 3; ix: 11, 14.
[103] Jno. ii: 1–10.

phasize this contrast with evident gratification but slink away when Jesus reminds them that the companions of the bridegroom surely should not fast and wear dejected countenances while the bridgegroom is with them; nevertheless, they await a better opportunity still further to evidence their opposition.

They spy upon the places where Jesus eats and drinks and insinuate that He is gluttonous and winebibbing.[104] The disciples of John, even in the Gospel accounts, are already apparently a well established sect while Jesus is still pleading for recognition and obedience on the part of those whom He addresses.[105] Nor did John's acclaimed supremacy by any means immediately dissolve on the ascendancy of Jesus as the accepted Messiah after His baptism.

The Johannites closely followed upon the latter's steps and even in the Gospel accounts watch His every movement suspiciously and with trepidation. Even in his prison cell awaiting the menace of decapitation, John himself counsels his disciples to seek out this strangely puzzling individual to learn whether or not He is leading the people astray or is truly what He claims to be, the One who was to come.

This John who once on the banks of the Jordan is said to have witnessed the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the head of the great Galilean whom the Father's voice proclaimed His Son in whom He was well pleased; this John who so willingly effaced himself and abjectly retired before the effulgent "light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world"; why has he begun to doubt and fear; why does he call to his prison cell his faithful disciples and enjoin them to bring him trustworthy news of one who may possibly be a pretender? What has happened? Does John no longer recognize Him; has he heard aught of Him that awakens in his breast premonitory trepidations?

John and his disciples were of course strict observers of

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[104] Mark ii: 15–16.
[105] Mark i: 5; Luke vii: 18–20.

the law of Moses; they obeyed the ceremonial rites and remained wholly within the confines of the synagogue. Their preachment, as we have already seen, was the purification of the soul through righteousness and baptism of the body, as a symbol of such purification. We have no record that they indulged in metaphysical phenomena; that they appraised their spiritual prerogatives by virtue of miracles they performed; that they were at all affected by occult or cabalistic doctrines or sought to demonstrate the authority of their indoctrinations by the achievement of mighty works and wonders.

Nor are we vouchsafed an understanding of John's emotions when, disturbed by what he had heard concerning the labors of the Galilean he received the answer of Jesus that He was proving his claims to the office of Messiah by his miracles.[106] What had happened that John should be thus overcome with doubt and trepidation? What had he expected of this alleged divinely acclaimed Messiah which seemed to have been contradicted by what he had heard concerning him? When he learns that this Jesus is not preaching the simple gospel of repentance and righteousness, obedience to the law of Moses and the ceremonial rites, but is instead amazing the multitude by causing the blind to see, the lame to walk, the dead to rise, we are not informed whether John was pleased or distressed.

The fact, however, is that the disciples of John continued to be a distinct and separate group from the disciples of Jesus, even during the life of the latter; that after Jesus had been officially recognized and accepted as the veritable Christ and a church was fully organized in His name, still there continued to be disciples of John who preached his Messianic message independently; this fact would indicate that John himself, even from his prison cell, had encouraged this schismatic relation between the disciples of Jesus and his own.

[106] Luke vii: 22, 23.

How shall we account for this strange anomaly, this discrepancy between John's alleged jubilant recognition of Jesus at the baptism in the waters of Jordan, when the latter was honored with a benediction from the heavenly Father, and John's apparently dubious and distrustful attitude toward the Master, once he had set about indoctrinating the people and triumphantly displaying His miraculous powers?

John's purpose was exactly that of the so-called Judaizers or Hellenistic Jews who had accepted Jesus. "Their great object was to turn the newly converted Christians into Jewish proselytes, who should differ from other Jews only in the recognition of Jesus as the Messiah. In their view, the natural posterity of Abraham were still as much as ever the theocratic nation, entitled to God's exclusive favor, to which the rest of mankind could be admitted only by becoming Jews." The Jesus whom John was willing to recognize proclaimed His mission to be in accord with that dogma. He refused to offer salvation to any but to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel." He preached repentance and purification by baptism, Himself setting the example by submitting to the washing in water by John. Thus far the disciples of the latter could find no fault with the Master's deliverances and achievements. There must, therefore, have appeared a changed or altered attitude in the Master's overtures and doctrines to have caused John and his disciples the anxiety which drove them into indignant antagonism. How else can we explain this curious revolt, exhibited in the annoying taunts at Jesus by Johannine disciples even during John's life; in the persistence of the sect of Johannites both during the life of Jesus and long after; in the fact that this schism continued to accept John as the Messiah, as we shall soon point out; how else can this discrepancy be understood unless we conclude that before the advent of Paul among the first followers of Jesus, the latter's doctrine was in agreement with that of John, but that following Paul's conquest the teachings and performances of

the Master have become inconsistent with if not contradictory to those of the Baptist?

In the four Gospels there are revealed two Jesuses: the John-Jesus and the Paul-Jesus, if we may so designate them.

The fact that the Gospels were composed by gradual accretion and that the objective of the Evangelists (especially of the authors of Luke's and John's Gospels) was to merge these two personages in one, so that ultimately the Pauline Jesus would over-shadow the Johannine Jesus, reducing the latter to a nullity, would very largely explain the discrepancies we have above indicated.

The Acts informs us that there were many among the Jews of the Dispersion (they are the Hellenists) who had accepted John in the capacity of Messiah or at least as their Master, and knew nothing about Jesus but "knew only the Baptism of John." "From the great part which was acted by the forerunner of Christ in the first announcement of the Gospel, and from the effect produced on the Jewish nation by his appearance, and the number of disciples who came to receive at his hands the baptism of repentance, we should expect some traces of his influence to appear in the subsequent period during which the Gospel was spreading beyond Judea. Many Jews from other countries received from the Baptist their knowledge of the Messiah, and carried with them this knowledge on their return from Palestine." [107]

But even so; why should that knowledge concerning the Messiah contributed by John himself not have been sufficient for them to efface John, following his own example on the banks of the Jordan and accepting the Jesus whom he himself had acknowledged? Why do "we read of a heretical sect at a much later period who held John the Baptist to have been himself the Messiah"? [108] If there had not been even

[107] *Life and Epistles of St. Paul,* Conybeare and Howson, p. 385.

[108] "Mark is quite oblivious of any part the Baptist might have had in bringing about the great repentance. The fourth Gospel goes further still in the direction of depriving John of any significance . . . declaring

in the time of Jesus a sect acknowledging the Messianic office of John, on what ground could a subsequent sect of that character have been established?

And if these Johannites persisted in spite of the triumph of the Paulinian Jesus until they were denounced as heretical, it reveals the fact that there must have been a continuous opposition by them to this Jesus. Yet such an opposition could not have been established against the Jesus whom John is said to have proclaimed. It must have been another Jesus against whom he himself apparently inaugurates this opposition by advertising his own perturbation behind the prison walls; and from that time it would seem the Messianic Johannites revolted from the Jesus whom Paul had attempted to impose upon them. Were not then, as above suggested, these Messianic Johannites among the Judaizers "who insisted upon the observance of the law of Moses, and especially circumcision as an absolute requisite for admission into the Church"? For both Jesus and John who evangelized only Jews certainly were circumcised [109] and we know kept strictly within the compass of the principles of *Mosaism*. They both denounced the perfunctory obedience of the rites yet in no way indicated they should be abrogated.[110]

Judaizers whom Paul met, who so much annoyed him, and whom he so violently cursed, because they refused submission to his authority, must then have been at least in part, these Johannites. To them he was presenting a Jesus contradictory of the message which the Galilean with whom John had associated was expected to deliver. But Paul apparently

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his baptism to have no purpose whatever but merely to point out the Greater than himself sent to baptize with the Holy Ghost. . . . But this is mere effort to counteract the rival claims of the later followers of John who continued long after, notably at Ephesus, to maintain that their master had been superior to Jesus, who only took up and completed the work of the great reformer. Indeed a remnant of the disciples of John exists to this day under the name of the Mandæans on the shores of the Persian gulf" (*The Story of Jesus*, B. W. Bacon, 1927, p. 193).

[109] Luke ii: 21.

[110] Matt. v: 18.

had not heard of this original Jesus, the Nazarene, and was therefore deeply embittered by the opposition. Had Paul known that, as reported in the Gospels, Jesus, when confronted by the disciples whom John had sent from his prison to enquire of His mission, had answered as He did, how gladly would he not have cited the incident in support of his own policy. For according to that report Jesus did not assure John that, consonant with their original understanding at the Jordan baptism, He was preaching merely repentance and righteousness, but was proving His authority by "mighty works and wonders" regardless of the restrictions of the Mosaic code; had Paul known that Jesus in His reply to John's enquiry said that He had enjoined faith in Himself as a miracle worker rather than obedience to the law; acceptance of His Messianic office because He could cure the blind and raise the dead rather than merely through submission to baptism as a symbol of repentance; how readily would not Paul have seized upon this incident as authoritative proof of his own revolutionary gospel. But Paul apparently knew nothing of this, and seemed totally ignorant of John and the Jesus whom he honored until he had fallen upon traveling missionaries who informed him. Manifestly the scene on the banks of the Jordan must have been written after Paul's ascendancy and the submergence of John as a leader.

XV

Paul was plainly angered at the Nazarenes and Johannites because they had set up the claims of a Deliverer who was obedient to the law; and yet, as we have observed, when he was confronted with their disciples, in all his arguments against them he did not refer to this incident wherein when this alleged Jesus was also confronted with the identical issue, namely, whether His Messiahship was to be attested by the doctrine of repentance and righteousness or by the ex-

hibition of power to do "mighty works," He answered them according to Paul's formula and not according to John's. The more we study this startling discrepancy between the original Jesus, or by whatever name he may have been known, proclaimed by John, and the characteristics of the Jesus proclaimed by Paul, the more it becomes apparent that Paul had substituted a Jesus "revealed to him not by flesh and blood" for that Jesus or Messiah whom the first disciples had honored. Was not this the "other Jesus"[111] whom Paul accused the Judaizers of opposing to his Jesus?

However, the Apostle to the Gentiles, in spite of his disposition to curse and terrify those who disputed his authority,[112] was equally gracious and considerate toward any who displayed a desire to learn from him what he declared to be "a more excellent way." Torn with a thousand tortures because of spies, antagonists, terrorizers and traducers, what joy it must have been to him to find betimes some who lent an ear to his intense asseverations! Preaching with ardor, and with an absorbing consecration to that Jesus Christ who was vouchsafed him not by man but by revelation; a solitary champion of a hero of whom the world had not yet heard; what must have been his amazement when he first encountered some who challenged the authority of that Jesus and sought to exalt another!

One day he listens enrapt to an eloquent and most learned preacher, who astonishes him by referring to one John, who clad in a coat of camel's hair went up and down all Palestine preaching the gospel of repentance and baptizing multitudes on the banks of the Jordan. He hears the orator describe the intense earnestness and fanatical devotion of this man to the ideals of Judaism, denouncing hypocrites and admonishing sinners of the punishment that shall befall the disobedient. Paul was amazed at the learning of the speaker, at his in-

[111] II Cor. xi: 4 and Gal. i: 6, 7.
[112] Gal. i: 8, 9.

timate acquaintance with ancient Scripture and his skill in interpreting the law.

For this man had come from Alexandria, a Jew, by the name of Apollos. Probably he belonged to the school of Philo, possibly he might have sat at the feet of that famous Alexandrian Jewish philosopher and been taught by some rhetorician in the art of oratory. We must, however, admit that it is somewhat uncertain whether Paul himself personally listened to this ingratiating speaker, or whether only his disciples had heard him and reported to Paul their impression. However, from the reading of the narrative in The Acts, it seems not too presumptuous to assume that Paul may, indeed, have heard the message of Apollos.

And to Paul what a strange message it was! The burden of it was not like Paul's proclamation of a crucified and resurrected Savior, whose blood was shed as a propitiation for the sins of the world. Apparently this advanced and idealistic Jew had not as yet heard of such an one as Paul exalted. For when Paul's friends, Aquila and Priscilla, heard the inspiring message Apollos delivered they felt that despite his learning in the ancient Scriptures and his adeptship in refined and meticulous interpretation, he was as yet unhappily ignorant of the sublime hero whom their master, Paul, was proclaiming to the world. Having heard a report of his eloquence and his cordial reception in the synagogues where he preached they eagerly attended, instigated by the hope that he might become a convert and a colaborer with Paul.

They found that while "he spake and taught accurately the things concerning the Lord," regretfully they perceived that "he knew only the baptism of John."

Unfortunately today as we read of the event as described in The Acts we are misled by a false interpretation. It would seem, according to this inference that Apollos had already heard of Jesus and "taught accurately concerning him."

But a correct translation of the Greek text does not permit us to believe this. For without a doubt this learned Apollos, although he was living contemporaneously with Paul who had filled all Asia with a knowledge of his hero, had never before heard of his Christ. Greek scholars are well acquainted with this fact. The capable commentator, Bloomfield,[113] howbeit orthodox, expressly informs us of the error of the orthodox interpretation. The word in the text which is translated "Lord" is "*kurios.*" Only by a stretch of the imagination can it be made to refer to Jesus. "On taking '*kurios*' here," says the learned Bloomfield, "to denote Christ, we may understand 'instructed in the doctrine of a *Messiah,' not in the doctrine of Jesus Christ,* for Apollos knew only the doctrine of John, who preached repentance." (Italics mine.)

From this it is clear that until Apollos had met Paul or his disciples he had never heard of Jesus as the Messiah, knowing only the baptism of John (and his Messianic candidacy) despite the fact that John is supposed to have introduced Jesus and proclaimed him the Son of God and had heard the voice of the heavenly Father bless Him. The text is very confusing and will bear a little study. If, according to the English translation, Apollos were really capable of speaking and teaching "accurately the things concerning the Lord" (i. e., Jesus Christ), why then, was it necessary for Aquila and Priscilla to take him home, after listening to him in the synagogue and "expound unto him the way of God more accurately"? What could they teach him if he already "spake and taught accurately the things concerning the lord" if by that term we are to understand Paul's Christ? Bloomfield, following the requirements of correct translation, after informing us that Apollos could not have made any reference to the Jesus who has been revealed to us in the gospels, assures us "it should rather seem that he had been baptized

[113] "Greek Text with English notes" *in loc.*

not long before by one of John's disciples; and, in short, was become one of the sect of the Johannites which existed about this period." (*See Appendix G.*)

Thus are we forced to conclude that the Johannites of that time, so close to the period in which the Jesus of the Gospels is supposed to have existed, knew nothing of him and had their knowledge of a Messiah confined to a knowledge of John only, whom they believed to be the "one looked for," being totally ignorant of the Jesus whom Paul was acclaiming. In this incident we discover a positive insinuation that the Jesus whom Paul was preaching, who was not made known to him "by flesh and blood but by revelation," was a creation or discovery of his own. How directly this leads us to the deduction that in some ingenious manner the authors of the Gospel narratives constructed or published popular legends concerning the character and career of Jesus which had grown up out of the elements supplied by the Epistles of Paul, a character, apparently unknown to the historical John, howbeit the latter is made a legendary individual who becomes the forerunner of Paul's hero!

The efforts of commentators to prove that Apollos personally knew of the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, in spite of the unquestionable implication in The Acts, that he was instructed in the way of the Lord and knew only the baptism of John, are not convincing. Thus Meyer,[114] the eminent German hermeneutist, unwittingly permits himself to fall into error, because of following the false interpretation to which Bloomfield called attention. He says: Apollos had been instructed in the way of the Lord—that is the divine purpose to redeem Israel through the Messiah, *whom he believed to be Jesus of Nazareth*" (sic!). The phrase which I have italicized indicates the common error of insufficiently critical investigators. The correctly translated text affords not the slightest intimation that Apollos had ever heard of Jesus of Nazareth as I

[114] Meyer's *Commentary on the New Testament, in loc.*

have above indicated. But Meyer proceeds to establish his reason for thinking that Apollos believed Jesus to be the expected Messiah: "For with great fervor of spirit and force of speech he taught accurately the things concerning the Lord Jesus (sic) so far as he knew him." The persistence of this erroneous interpretation, based on a false implication of the Greek word, *kurios,* as already explained above, merely illustrates how difficult it is for even scholars who are prejudiced in favor of one view to alter it on the presentation of evidence which totally overthrows it.

However, the difficult situation, to which I have already referred, namely that Apollos, a disciple of John, should be ignorant of Jesus in spite of the fact that John himself is supposed to have recognized and honored Him with abject devotion, is not unrecognized by Dr. Meyer, but most curiously, not to say illogically explained. On this point he remarks: "It is not to be supposed that Apollos was ignorant of the fact that Jesus was the Christ, . . . for this was the keynote of John's ministry."

No, naturally, if the story about the baptism of Jesus by John and the latter's exaltation of the former is to be taken as an historical fact, then it is inconceivable indeed that Apollos could have been ignorant of the existence of the Nazarene. But if the Gospel story be construed as a later invention or legend built up on the material presented in the Pauline Epistles, then it may be well understood how the discrepancy might have been inadvertently permitted to occur. The historical persistence of a Johannine party that proclaimed the Messiahship of their leader, apparently at first unacquainted with the advent of Jesus who also claimed to be the Messiah, undoubtedly neutralizes, if it does not disprove, the legend of the baptism on the banks of the Jordan. For it would have been impossible for two such parties to continue to exist contemporaneously, the one insisting on the Messiahship of John, and the other that of Jesus, if John himself, the founder of

his party whom his disciples obeyed and from whom they received their instruction, had submerged his office in that of Jesus, and totally effaced himself, save as the latter's abject disciple and votary.

To escape the discrepant inconsistency of the text commentators, following Meyer's error, imaginatively divide the followers of John into three classes: "Those, including a large majority, who became disciples of Christ; those who formed a small sect of their own, holding that John was the Messiah; and those who being removed from Palestine held just what John taught." Within the first class, if we are to take the example of the Ephesians, to whom we shall in a moment return, as typical, then we must conclude that only those who were converted under the influence of Paul or of his disciples, from whom for the first time they hear about Jesus, are to be included.

In the second and third classes must be included all those who had originally followed John, and from his announcement of himself in the wilderness had learned to regard him as the Messiah, from which they never retreated, in spite of John's self-sacrificing subordination and surrender to Jesus (a thing quite impossible to conceive).

The incident of what happened when Paul met a few Ephesians who adhered only to what John had taught throws considerable light on the problem we are studying. If we assume that the disciples of John had permeated all through Asia Minor and had set up churches in his name, these disciples must have been converted to John before he had met Jesus and had abdicated in His favor. This would show, of course, that the Nazarene followers who had come over from John had accepted his doctrine of repentance as the substantial basis of their salvation. Consequently the first Nazarenes must have been indoctrinated according to John's teachings, which, as we have previously observed, was precisely what Jesus as the Nazarene is reported to have taught in His original mes-

sages. If then the Nazarene's teachings had so altered as to cause consternation in the breast of the imprisoned John, it must have been by reason of the very doctrine which we learn from his Epistles Paul had inculcated. For after Paul's invasion of the Jerusalem church, as formerly explained, Jesus ceased to be regarded merely as a prophet insisting on repentance and a new life of righteousness, and became the metaphysical phenomenon which Paul, or whoever wrote the book of Hebrews (possibly Apollos), described as "the brightness of God's glory and the express image of his person, upholding all things by the word of his power."

This, as already shown, is a wholly new conception of that Jesus whom we know as the Nazarene, and to whom John is reported to have so humbly surrendered his office. Of the Pauline Jesus, these Ephesians had evidently never heard. Else there had been no necessity for Paul to "baptize them into the name of Jesus." He hears that they have received only the baptism of John and never heard that there was a Holy Ghost. Directly he baptizes them into the name of Jesus the Holy Ghost enswathes them and they speak with tongues, etc. What else can this mean but that they belonged to the Johannine party or cult and that Jesus was to them an unknown person, until Paul introduces Him? Yet how could this be possible if John had himself sanctioned the office of Jesus and had seen the Holy Ghost fall upon Him?

A halting explanation of this embarrassing situation is attempted by orthodox interpreters. "The persons referred to were believers in Jesus as the Messiah," says the American editor of Meyer's *Commentary*, "and had as yet a very imperfect experience. From the fact that they seem to hold the same relation to John as Apollos did, they were probably converts under his first ministry."

But the text affords us no assurance that they were "believers in Jesus as the Messiah." To these Ephesians who had not even implied that they had ever heard of Jesus, Paul

says: "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Jesus." Here is the first announcement to them that there was such a person as Jesus. The only logical solution of the situation, therefore, is that John himself knew nothing of this Jesus whom Paul is representing. But the writer of The Acts, which was composed of course after the Epistles of Paul had appeared (whose authority by this time was established among the apostles), recorded a legend which appertained to the conversion of Apollos and the Ephesians, and the Evangelists published a rumor about John's baptism of Jesus in the Jordan and the descent of the Holy Ghost, in order to authenticate Paul's Christ and retire John as the acclaimed Messiah. For as Bengel "justly remarks: 'They (the Ephesians) could not have followed either Moses or John without hearing of the Holy Ghost.' " Therefore, as they were ignorant of this Holy Ghost, they could not have heard that John himself observed it descend on the brow of the Galilean whom he baptized with water.

The story about the Ephesians in The Acts and that of the Holy Ghost baptism in the Jordan therefore cannot both be true as they are mutually contradictory.

Again, I call attention to the incident in the Gospel stories already referred to, which plainly indicates that the Jesus whom Paul brought over with him from Asia was not the Jesus whom John is made to honor at the baptism. If they were the same, John would never have sent from his prison cell to enquire for Christ's testimonials. But insomuch as the phenomenal hero of Paul was superimposed on the semi-historical Nazarene Jesus, the Gospel writers, seeking to merge the two in one heroic figure, were forced to invent or to appropriate the legend of John's disturbing uncertainty of the true office of the Jesus of whom he had latterly heard. To negotiate a consistent situation, the Gospel writers make

Jesus reply evasively to John's anxious enquiry and to assure him that the divine attestation of His office may be perceived by the emissaries themselves in His miraculous achievements. The entire story concerning the baptism by John may indeed have grown out of Paul's own statement about the Baptizer.[115]

Thus the seeming discrepancy between the Jesus whom John is supposed to have acclaimed and the Jesus or Christ whom Paul had imposed on the followers of the Nazarene was accounted for and the two were happily reconciled and merged together. By this ingenious gloss the Evangelists avoided a perplexity by merely making it appear that the utterly unhistorical and imaginary hero, visioned by Paul in an hallucination, was identical with the humble Galilean who sought only the spiritual regeneration of His people by teaching them how to obey the law void of hypocrisy and pretentious degeneracy.

The Ephesian incident, as well as that relating to Apollos, must of course be taken as typical of the relative values attached to Jesus and John by that entire community of Messianic societies throughout Asia Minor, whom Paul had not yet converted by his own propaganda.

XVI

There were evidently numerous churches already established throughout Asia Minor,[116] to which Paul refers as "churches of Judæa in Christ," which must have been founded by messengers from the original apostles, or by the

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115 See p. 242 *supra.*

116 The Hellenistic believers in Jesus had been very active among their brethren and had converted many in Damascus, Palestine, Syria, Cilicia and had established a strong center in Antioch, the metropolis of the East. . . . They pushed boldly across the mountains to Antioch, in Pisidia. There Paul and Barnabas found the Jews hostile and the Gentiles enthusiastic, and declared that "henceforth they would turn to the Gentiles (*Life of St. Paul;* F. J. Foakes Jackson, p. 110).

apostles themselves, but which Paul had not personally visited, yet of whose existence he knew. They were undoubtedly institutions established in the name of Jesus, or of Christ as Paul designates, or possibly by votaries of John, whose constituency was Jewish. Having been established before Paul began his ministry [117] and to whom he is unknown by face,[118] they must have been those converts to the Messiah or the Nazarene whom John is alleged to have acclaimed, and whom the apostles honored before they became converted to Paul's hero, on the occasion of his conquering invasion at Jerusalem. These "churches of Judæa in Christ" must therefore have been composed of members whose instruction was similar to that of the Ephesians and Apollos. They were then necessarily acquainted only with the baptism of John and his Messianic claim and the doctrine of repentance and regeneration through obedience to the law which both John originally and, after him, Jesus taught. They could not have been apprised of Paul's teachings, having been founded before his ministry was recognized by the apostles, and must therefore have been equally unacquainted with his doctrine of baptism into the Holy Ghost or "baptism into the name of Jesus." If they worshipped any Jesus, then, which must be doubtful (for both Apollos and the Ephesians were ignorant of him, as we have shown before), that Jesus could have been none other than He whom the original apostles honored, namely the humble Nazarene, who in no way sponsored the metaphysical gospel which Paul was afterwards to propagate.

From this source, doubtless, must have sprung those teachers who gave Paul so much alarm and trepidation. They are preaching, as we have already remarked, "another gospel" and "another Jesus" than his own; they seem to be not content only to build up their own organizations but encroach on the new societies which Paul is founding. He finds himself

117 Rom. xvi: 7.
118 Gal. i: 22.

horrified, soon after leaving the Galatian body of believers in his sublime Ideal, to learn that they have been turning away "the grace of Christ unto a different gospel." Those, then, to whom he makes his appeal, who give him so much concern, cannot be the orthodox or unconverted Jews, but those Jews only who had accepted either Jesus or John as the Messiah, yet not the "image of God" whom Paul advocates as the Christ; for they preach "another gospel, who trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ" as Paul declares. Paul presents to them a Christ or Messiah, whose "glad tidings" or gospel is different from what those trouble makers call their "gospel"; so annoyed is he that he denounces their preaching as "not another gospel," while inconsistently admitting it is a "different gospel." [119]

Clearly he is unable to convince or convert these "trouble makers" as he did Apollos and the Ephesians. He hurls upon them his curse and consigns them to Satan.[120] They are preaching a different Christ, a different Jesus than his own. His societies are already seething with divisions and schisms. He has difficulty in restraining them from returning to Judeo-Christian notions, which are seeping into his followers and are contrary to the teachings that they heard fall from his lips. "I beseech you, brethren, mark them which are causing divisions and occasions of stumbling," he cries. He nowhere inveighs against the pagan cults from which he wrested his Gentile followers, save merely to remind them that they must avoid a semblance of worshipping idols; but his indignation is not aroused by them. His curses and condemnations fall only on those who preach a conflicting and different gospel of salvation than his own; who seek to challenge with another Jesus, the Christ Jesus he uplifts; his warfare is always against the seduction of Jewish doctrine, the works of the law against the grace of faith; the narrowness and bigotry

[119] Gal. i: 6.
[120] Gal. i: 8 and 9; II Cor. xi: 13, 14.

of Mosaism against the "freedom that is in Christ"; the circumcision of the flesh against the circumcision of the heart; the virtue of "works" which is "death" against "faith" which is of the spirit and "giveth life."

Clearly his entire struggle is against the Johannites or Jesuans who know nothing of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, or the magical benefits of "baptism into the name of Jesus"; who are still obedient to the simple doctrines of the Nazarenes who enjoined but repentance and fulfillment of the law of righteousness.

Thus we are led to understand and appreciate why the writers of the Gospels (written many generations after Paul's Epistles were distributed) constructed the dramatic story of the Jordan baptism, where the Holy Ghost played so important a role; after the reception of whose baptism by Jesus the latter was declared to have been endued with magical powers and soon set forth on preaching a gospel of "faith" and attesting His authority by the performance of many "mighty works." These phases of the Nazarene's career are superimposed in the Gospels upon the character of "the meek and lowly" Carpenter's Son who went about Palestine, humbly preaching the doctrine of repentance and obedience to the Mosaic code, carrying on the mission of John after the latter's decapitation.

XVII

Indeed Paul's indignation, not to say exasperation, at the popular misinterpretation of his self-assumed authority as the protagonist of an independent gospel, forces him to expose the fact that he alone is to be regarded as the founder and originator of the religion which he expounds.

Disturbed and angered by the fact that there are schisms and "divisions" among his followers, because they compare and dispute about the authority of Cephas and Apollos and

Paul, he chastises them because they have lost sight of the fountain head of their inspiration. Wittingly or unwittingly, Paul practically says he, himself, conceived and originated the noble syncretism of pagan and Jewish religion, which he denominates, the "mystery of godliness," and that whoever else co-operates with him in its propagation does so only by his permission and under his authority.

Appalled at the knowledge that the Corinthians, over whom he shed so many tears because of their iniquitous habits, are divided among themselves and know not whether to follow him or others with whom he co-operates, he exclaims: "Though ye have ten thousand tutors in Christ yet ye have not many *fathers;* for in Christ I *begat you* through the good tidings." [121] That is, I, as a father begets his children, begat Christ Jesus in you; I brought to you the good tidings (gospel) of this Jesus. You may have ten thousand teachers *about* the Christ, once He has been revealed to you; but you can have only one father, which is he who made the revelation; and that is Myself! I alone brought the good tidings (gospel) of this Jesus as a father bestows the seed that generates his offspring.

This is not an exaggerated interpretation; else why does he place himself in the office of a father, a begetter, a generator, a giver of the seeds of life? If he did not mean this he would have said he was a brother, or a helper, or an interpreter of the "good tidings," or employ some other expression which would not imply he was the original bestower of the gospel tidings upon them.

That, indeed, his viewpoint may not be misapprehended, he conceives another rhetorical figure which makes his meaning even clearer. "According to the grace of God which was given me," he says, "as a wise masterbuilder, I laid the *foundation,* and another buildeth thereon." [122] Language could scarcely more vividly reveal the conviction of Paul that he

[121] I. Cor. iv: 15.
[122] I. Cor. iii: 10.

was the first to construct the system of "faith" on which human salvation depends. If he laid the foundation and another builded thereon, surely he must have been the first to begin the construction of the edifice while others merely helped the building to progress. He seems to be so aroused to the seriousness of the situation, which apparently calls in question the priority and authority of his deliverances, that he warns them lest anybody else should deceive them by pretending to have laid the foundation himself. "Let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon; for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid." As much as to say: Build on this foundation which I have laid, or hands off! If you want to construct an edifice different from the plan which I have already undertaken, let go; build your own foundation; but don't attempt to say that the foundation which is already laid is other than my own!

And what is that foundation? He tells us plainly: "The foundation is Christ Jesus."[123] Other Messiahs, or Christs, there have been; other gospels or good tidings you have heard; but "take heed," beware; these other Christs are not my foundation. That there may be no uncertainty as to which Christ he preaches, and differentiates from another Christ, he says: The Christ which is the foundation of the faith delivered to you is Christ *Jesus;* but mistake not; it is the Christ who "died for our sins according to the Scriptures," etc. That you may know that my Christ is a different foundation than other Christs, note: he is the Christ Crucified: (not merely a pale preacher of ceremonialism and righteousness); a "stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles."[124]

The Messiahship of John was not a stumbling block to the Jews. The Messiah, or Christ, who was the original Jesus, the Nazarene, was not a stumbling block to the Jews. Nor

[123] I Cor. iii: 11.
[124] I Cor. i: 23.

was either of them "foolishness to the Gentiles"; for the Gentiles troubled not themselves concerning either. Jesus and John never disturbed the confines of Gentilism or paganism, for those realms were beyond their notice. They came only to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Therefore neither of them could have been the Christ Jesus to whom Paul refers. They both preached freely in the synagogues and held themselves aloof from the Gentiles. They were not Paul's Christ. Hence with fiery earnestness he exclaims: "I am determined not to know anything among you save *Jesus* Christ and him crucified."[125] There is the crux of the faith he demands; there is the foundation, namely the crucifixion of the Redeemer. No gospel before that of Paul had even intimated such a foundation; the gospel which the Baptist preached evidently presented no such a hero crucified to redeem mankind, for Apollos and the Ephesians were ignorant of Him. No masterbuilder had conceived an edifice of salvation whose substance was composed of the blood of a crucified Savior. Therefore there was division among his followers; therefore some said they followed Paul; some Apollos and some Cephas. Doubtless there were other contesting masterbuilders whose rivalry is not mentioned.

What was the cause of these threatening schisms? We are not directly informed. But by implication it appears to be some new doctrine about which they disagreed. Cephas, as we know, was at first a strict Jewish ceremonialist. Salvation for him came through righteousness and obedience of the law. Apollos at first knew only the baptism of John and his teaching of repentance. But Paul opposed ceremonialism and discarded the baptism. Above all, Paul insisted only on a crucified Savior and redemption through faith in His resurrection.

If any doubt had been created among the disciples whom Paul had called to his banner, it could have arisen only from

[125] I Cor. ii: 2.

the specific new doctrines which Paul had foisted on the other teachers. The narrowness and miopic spiritual vision of Peter could easily clash with the broad philosophical outlook of Apollos patterned after Philo's occult generalizations. Paul confined himself to the supremacy of Jesus the Christ who had revealed to him "the mystery of godliness." As to the primacy of these doctrines, that is, on which one the supreme emphasis should be placed, a quarrel might easily have arisen, or a confusing perplexity among the converts. In his anguish lest a genuine schism should take place (as indeed it afterwards did, if we are to accept as historical the account of the conflict between Paul and Peter at Antioch), the Apostle to the Gentiles exclaims: "One saith I am of Paul; another I am of Apollos; another, I am of Cephas."[126] "Why should you be so disturbed," he asks of his perplexed followers: "What is Apollos; what is Paul? Ministers through whom ye believed." As much as to say: "Both of us are agents of the Lord to implant truth in your breasts." Nevertheless he does not hesitate, by employing an artful rhetorical figure, to make it clear to them that whatever peculiar personal construction of the truth Apollos may present, it cannot be the truth unless it accords with his own. For he continues: "I planted the seed; Apollos watered; but God giveth the increase."[127]

He is unwilling to allow that Apollos, together with himself, planted the first seeds, but insists that he alone is the original planter. Apollos merely came afterwards to spray the water upon it that "God might give the increase." Thus he attempts to harmonize the troubled converts by assuring them that his own doctrine must prevail, even though it be colored by the preaching of Apollos; he alone is the planter, he alone lays the foundation. The others may water his seed

[126] I Cor. i: 12.
[127] I Cor. iii: 6.

or continue the building that rests on the foundation he has already laid; then all will be well and peace will ensue. What other logical deduction can be made from his premise?

XVIII

However, apparently, he is unwilling that his primacy in indoctrination shall be supported merely by implication. He does not hesitate to make a clear declaration that he alone is responsible for the introduction of the new doctrine or "mystery" which has since been regarded as the substance and essence of that theology we now know as Christianity. As I have already observed, he refers to it as a "stumbling block to the Jews and unto the Gentiles, foolishness." Why?

It must surely be something quite extraordinary and unheard of to confuse both Jews and Gentiles. What does Paul mean? Perhaps we may get a glimpse of his enigmatical utterances by studying his words in Rom. xvi:25: "Now to him that is able to establish you," as if to say: "You who have often been disturbed by doctrines that seem to have unsettled you, listen, I will now utter the teaching that will 'establish you.' " "To establish you," he continues, "according to MY gospel, according to the revelation of mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but is now manifested." Observe, here Paul distinctly announces that the doctrine he is preaching is his own—his message of the "glad tidings," his personal and authoritative "gospel," for which he alone vouches. Unto no one else has this "revelation of mystery" been entrusted. Moreover it is a mystery concerning which "the times eternal" have not been informed but which has been locked in age-long silence.

If it were not a matter of supreme importance; if it were not something wholly different from what other pretentious "gospels" have proclaimed; if, indeed, it were not an in-

novation of extreme character, he would not, it would seem, have introduced it with such emphasis and solemnity. But now what is this eternally concealed "mystery"?

Strange that these words have not been more meticulously examined by commentators and students of the origin of Christianity! It was a "stumbling block to the Jews." What was? Paul has, in the last analysis, but one doctrine: the crucifixion and resurrection of the Redeemer. This is indeed a stumbling block to the Jews, not only to the orthodox who need but little concern themselves with it, but to the converted Jews who have come over from the camps of John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth. Therefore the followers of Cephas, who dread to substitute it for the simple law of obedience and "righteousness," stumble at it. The followers of Apollos, who had known only, before hearing the new doctrine of Paul, the baptism of John and had never heard of Paul's Jesus, likewise "stumble" at it. To all Jews, therefore, orthodox or converts, this novel and startling doctrine of Paul is indeed a "stumbling block."

But why should it be "unto the Gentiles foolishness"? And here is the crux! It was not, apparently, a stumbling block to well-informed Gentiles; for it was already an age-worn doctrine of which they (that is the learned among them) had grown tired. It had become foolish, negligible, absurd, as a basis of rational belief. In short, it was a superstition. What was it?

Paul writes so often as a mystagogue (that is, one intimately acquainted with the occult inculcations of the ancient pagan "mystery religions") that he unwittingly divulges the source of his "inspiration." Listen as he explains this age-concealed "mystery" to Timothy: "Beyond controversy." That is, notwithstanding disputes and potential schisms among us this truth of MY gospel is "beyond controversy." You must not question or doubt it; it is absolute and final! "Great is the mystery of godliness."

Christian scholars have for ages pondered these words, and what have been their interpretations? Dr. Hatch in the *Encyclopedia Britannica,* under the article, "Paul," presents the hackneyed interpretation. "He (Paul) had been entrusted with a secret (*musterion*) which 'had been kept silent through eternal times.' . . . This secret was that 'the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospels.' "

If this is the true interpretation, it is palpably a *reductio ad absurdum.* It must occur to any well informed student that Paul could not have made so great an ado; have so awakened the curiosity and anxious anticipation of his pupil or young convert, Timothy; if all that he meant by his cryptic utterance was the superficial interpretation above expressed by Dr. Hatch, and which is universally accepted by Christendom as correct. The privilege, here granted the Gentiles, to become partakers of the promise of Christ Jesus, of course aroused the issue as to the abrogation of the rite of circumcision among the converts. It is allowed that on this doctrine of "circumcision" the church split at Antioch. But was that, indeed, all that Paul referred to in the above sudden revelation of the great "mystery" which had been sealed "through times eternal"? If Paul had merely intended his words to be so construed he would have made himself ridiculous.

For this question of circumcision and uncircumcision among Gentiles converted to the Jewish faith was a problem that had been raked over for ages among the rabbis themselves. So far from being a new doctrine, or a "mystery of godliness," "kept secret through times eternal," it had already been quite well settled by designating the converts to Judaism, though remaining uncircumcised, as "proselytes at the Gate." Only at a later date was even the removal of this distinctive classification discussed. Says Dr. Kaufman Kohler, the learned rabbinist, in the *Jewish Encyclopedia:* "It appears that while the Palestinian Jews accepted the uncircumcised proselytes

only as 'proselytes at the Gate,' non-Palestinian Judaism did not make such distinction until the Roman wars." It was by no means a novel thing for the Jews to offer the privilege of the synagogue to the Gentile converts even though they did not yield to the rite of circumcision. To say that this was the "mystery of godliness" which Paul with such exaggerated emphasis proposed to divulge for the first time "through times eternal" not only makes him, a learned rabbinist, unacquainted with the usages of his own people, but exposes him to the charge of being absurd. There were in Jewry two well-known parties, one of them contending that circumcision was a necessity and the other that repentance and baptism were sufficient. That is, the very issue concerning which, on the interpretation of orthodox Christian scholars, Paul presumptively was for the first time to declare that he had received a special "revelation," was already well known to the rulers of the Sanhedrin and had long lost its novel flavor. Says the same Jewish authority as above quoted: "The issue between the Zealot and Liberal parties regarding the circumcision of the proselyte remained an open one; Rabbi Joshua asserting that the baptismal rite rendered a person a full proselyte without circumcision, while Rabbi Eliezer makes circumcision a condition for the admission of the proselyte." [128a]

[128a] In the light of Dr. Kohler's statement it would appear that Mr. Foakes-Jackson errs when he says: "It used commonly to be assumed that there were two kinds of proselytes, those who sympathized with Judaism, . . . and those who threw their lot absolutely with Israel. But this distinction did not exist. Judaism did not recognize half-Jews. A proselyte must accept circumcision and become an Israelite or remain Gentile. He must be all or none (*Life of St. Paul*, J. F. Foakes-Jackson, p. 34).

But that author gives no authorities, Jewish or otherwise, to sustain his curious assertion. The fact is, that after the destruction of the second temple converts became so numerous, that certain special privileges had to be granted them. They were known as "half-converts" and the necessity for determining their status became imperative. By half-converts is meant a class of men and women of non-Jewish birth who, forsaking their ancestral pagan and polytheistic religions, embraced monotheism and adopted the fundamental principles of Jewish morality, *without, however,*

Whichever party was right or wrong in this controversy does not here concern us. All that interests us in the matter of Paul's assumed attitude is that he could not have pretended to regard his "revelation" as an unheard of "mystery of godliness" if it had reference only to the problem of granting the Gentiles salvation regardless of their submission to the rite of circumcision. For this was an old threadbare issue among the Jews, settled long since, in one way or another, to the satisfaction of the Jews without involving any notion of a "mystery," and concerning which it certainly could not be said the ages had been silent through "times eternal."

However, in Ephesians, Paul, speaking more specifically as to "the great mystery in Christ which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men," that the Gentiles might become "fellow heirs and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ," makes himself a little clearer on the problem we are investigating. He says: "I was a minister . . . to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God . . . to the intent that might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God according to the eternal purpose which was purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." [128b]

Again we must ask, what was this "eternal purpose"? It could not have reference to the age-long issue of circumcision or uncircumcision of the Gentiles, for, as I have shown, that was a worn out and hackneyed issue, and was never regarded as a "mystery"; for the meaning and purpose of circumcision was explained in the Abrahamic covenant. Merely to

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submitting to circumcision or observing other ceremonial laws. . . . Their number was very large during the centuries immediately preceding and following the fall of Jerusalem. The fifteenth Psalm has been interpreted as referring to them." * Modern Christian authorities are, as we see, in error who try to make it appear that the ceremony of circumcision never created a problem in Jewry and that Paul was the first to abrogate it and found a religion on the "circumcision of the heart" instead of circumcision of the flesh.

* *Jewish Encyclopedia*, art. "Proselytes."

[128b] Eph. iii: 5–9.

re-vamp what the rabbis, in the ancient and post-Biblical times, had gone over again and again, cannot be what Paul had in mind. Such a declaration as an explanation of a supposed mystery would indeed have been a *reductio ad absurdum,* banal, ludicrous. No; Paul must have intimated something far more fundamental, radical, revolutionary. What was it?

XIX

Let us go back a bit in our studies. We recall that it was said some pages before that the Mithraic religion was prevalent in Tarsus and that in his youth Paul, with the rest of the Hellenized Jews of that city, must have imbibed the doctrines of that and other pagan religions which were openly expounded in the streets and temples.

Now these religions, too, had a mystery; indeed the *mysterium magnum,* the undivulged and abysmal mystery, so completely complexioned their mythology or theology that their systems were known as the "Mystery Religions." Here, indeed, was a "mystery" which remained unexplained "through times eternal."

Of the substance of this mystery the masses, or the uninitiated, were held in total ignorance. Now what was this "mystery" which, in the language of Paul, even "the principalities and the powers in heavenly places," were not privileged to know? Surely the whole universe could not have been in travail over the racial question whether certain disciples of one select religion on earth should or should not submit to circumcision that they may "become fellow partakers of the promise."

Surely it could not be that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together until now" awaiting a solution of the issue whether Gentiles shall be accorded the blessing which mutually admiring Jews had theretofore conceived to be their

distinctive and exclusive privilege. Even Paul hints that the "mystery" is more fundamental than that. "We groan in our spirits," he says, "waiting for our adoption, *to wit,* the redemption of our body."[129]

Now it is to be noted that it was that very mystery, to wit, "the redemption of the body," which was the foundation rock of Paul's structure of faith, that constituted the essence of the widely distributed "mystery religions," with which, without a doubt, Paul must have been more or less intimately acquainted.

J. G. Frazer shows Paul's apparent familiarity with the pagan conception of immortality and resurrection in speaking of Osiris as follows:

> We have seen that in one of his aspects Osiris was the ruler and judge of the dead. To a people like the Egyptians, who not only believed in a life beyond the grave but actually spent much of their time, labor and money in preparing for it, this office of the god must have appeared hardly at all less important than his function of making the earth bring forth its fruits in due season. . . In laying their dead in the grave they committed them to his keeping who could raise them from the dust to life eternal even as he caused the seed to spring from the ground. Of that phase the corn-stuffed effigies of Osiris found in Egyptian tombs furnish eloquent and unequivocable testimony.
>
> They were at once an emblem and an instrument of resurrection. Thus from the sprouting of the grain the Egyptians drew the augury of human immortality. They are not the only people who have built the same far reaching hopes on the same slender foundation. "Thou fool, that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other grain; but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him; and to every seed his own body. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body!"[130]

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[129] Rom. viii: 23.

[130] *Adonis, Attis, Osiris,* pp. 344–345.

The resurrection of the body after death, indeed, was involved in the teachings of Hermes of old Egypt; in the teachings of Adonis, the Phœnician deity; in the teachings of Attys, of Dionysus, of Demeter and Persephone; indeed, in the mystic teachings of all the mythologies of antiquity. The doctrine of a crucified and resurrected deity through faith in whose blood mankind shall be delivered from the bonds of death; the doctrine that this deity was the Supreme Being temporarily incarnate in human flesh, who though equal with God becomes a lowly servant and yet deems it not a sacrilege to conceive himself in human form as revealing "the fulness of the Godhead," was by no means unique or original with that system of theology which Paul promulgated. Was not this the "mystery" to which Paul referred when he said to the Philippians: "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God; and being found in the fashion of a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea the death of the cross." [131] [132]

Was not Paul referring to this "mystery" when he assured Timothy, "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness"? And did he not, indeed, set forth to Timothy in detail what was the nature and essence of this great mystery? "He (Jesus or the Son of God), justified of the spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations (Gentiles), believed on in the world, received up into glory"?

Here is a doctrine mysterious, in truth, and one which Paul might have counted himself honored to have divulged to mankind. But why does Paul say that "he who was manifested in the flesh and seen of angels" had already been "preached among the nations" or Gentiles, if he had reference only to the Nazarene Jesus, who had not been heard of

[131] Phil. ii: 5, 6. See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, J. G. Frazer, pp. 183, 227, 328.
[132] See also Rom. viii: 3.

till in Paul's own time, and whose disciples were restricted to the handful that assembled in the "upper room" or at the first council called by the apostles? Here Paul seems to be referring to a "mystery" already well known but not explained to the uninitiated until he ventured to do so. It is a mystery, substantially pagan in its nature, wholly divergent from Hebraic thought or Scripture; yet Paul speaks of it in familiar terms, even seeking to graft it onto Jewish theological stock.

Paul preaching to the Gentiles, while yet a Jew in tradition, feels it is encumbent on him to substantiate the pagan doctrine with scriptural legend and authority. While there is not a hint of it in the prophets or psalm singers of Israel, he does discover in an Abrahamic legend a story that to his imaginative mind seems to lend itself in support of his pagan doctrine. In the mysterious king, Melchizedek, he finds a symbolic personage who prefigures and foretells the glory of the Christ.

Now, among orthodox Jews the character of Melchizedek had never been interpreted as having a prophetic reference to the Messiah; howbeit, there has always been much confusion of thought respecting this ancient, semi-mythological character. He was generally regarded as the first, though somewhat mysterious, king of Jerusalem. Because he held the offices of both priest and king, he came to be looked upon as intimately associated with God, and his correct name, some say, was Adonizedek (etymologically derived from Adonai, the name of the Hebrew deity, or Adonis, the name of the Phœnician deity.)

Thus the Psalmist sings in praise of the reigning king: "Jehovah saith unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, . . . Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

Paul, or the author of Hebrews, insinuates that this is a

prophetic reference to the Christ he is proclaiming.[133] But long before, the Alexandrian Jews, who were inclined to accept non-Jewish proselytes without imposing on them the rite of circumcision, regarded Melchizedek as a type of the monotheists who existed before the Abrahamic covenant was established.[134] Now, Philo, who of course was versed in this interpretation as well as in the "mystery of godliness" involved in pagan mythology or theology, announced that Melchizedek was the "Logos." This was the link that connected up the chain of alleged prophecy or pre-figurement of Melchizedek which Paul utilized by transferring the reference from the Logos to Christ Jesus.

Thus he describes his hero: "author of eternal salvation; named of God a *high priest* forever after the order of Melchizedek." [135]

Like Melchizedek he is "without father and without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto God abiding forever." [136] In this interpretation, the writer of Hebrews, either Paul or one of his disciples, notwithstanding its inconsistency with a previous declaration that he (Jesus) was "born of a woman, born under the law," "of the seed of David," reveals the occult or metaphysical conception he entertained of the Lord Jesus. In this sense the Redeemer is not a natural human being, but a purely spiritual ideal, without human genealogy or "descent," a mere concept of the mind, mystically incarnated, yet void of fleshly attributes.

This is the precise notion of the divine saviors entertained

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[133] "Not until the author of Hebrews felt the necessity of vindicating for Jesus the right of exercising priestly functions, is it likely that any one dreamed of regarding the fact that Melchizedek's parentage was not mentioned as an indication of the pre-existence of the Son of God, or found in the priest-king of Salem an intimation of the work and character of the ascended Christ." (*The Prophet of Nazareth*, Nathaniel Schmidt, 1905, p. 57.)

[134] *Jewish Encyclopedia*, art. "Melchizedek."

[135] Heb. 5: 9, 10.

[136] Heb. vii: 3.

by votaries at pagan shrines. Their saviors were all incarnated deities and though embodied in human form sustained an unalloyed heavenly nature.

"Krishna, the eighth avatar of the Hindus descended in all the plenitude of the godhead, and was Vishnu himself in human form" precisely as Paul conceived Jesus in whom "dwelt the fulness of the godhead bodily." Thus in the Vishnu Parana we read: "Krishna is the very supreme Brahma, though it is a mystery how a supreme being should assume human form."

This was undoubtedly the "mystery of godliness," so prevalent in the philosophical religious systems of ancient paganism, which as Paul insisted was "without controversy" to be believed in. Finding in Melchizedek a semi-historical or possibly mythological character whose origin and destiny Paul thinks prefigures that of Christ, he presumes to reveal the great mystery of the ages, for the first time, by a revelation of Melchizedek's true nature and proclaiming it as God's archetype of the Messianic character. This he does in an attempt to convince his converts that his doctrine of the Christ is substantiated by the authority of Jewish Scripture.

"Now, to him that is able to establish you, according to MY GOSPEL," he cries, "according to the *revelation of the mystery* which hath been kept secret through times eternal." [137] As I have said, to suppose that this has reference to the acceptance of the Gentiles into the fold without insisting on their circumcision, that they may become fellow beneficiaries of the Lord's promise, is to transform Paul's eloquence into frothy rhodomontade. But to conceive it as referring to Paul's resistless temerity in undertaking to interpret and divulge the dazzling mystery of the Eleusinia, which none but initiates were permitted to know, of which the masses were in total ignorance and terror, which Euripides once chanced to hint at in one of his plays and was almost sub-

[137] Rom. xvi: 25.

jected to the torture of the mob because of it; to realize that Paul has assumed the responsibility of defying the ages; and making known this fundamental and overawing secret to all mankind, affords a sufficient cause for his earnestness, his intensity, his stubborn egotism and his fiery fanaticism. No one who has not undertaken some tremendously unparalleled courageous act would use such fervent language, holding his hearers in awe and suspense because of the startling discovery he is about to divulge; because of his realization that he was to be the first of all mankind who dared be so bold as to reveal it.

For Paul, while perhaps not a learned man as compared, for instance, with Philo, or Hillel, or Gamaliel, his contemporaries, yet sufficiently cultured in the common learning of his day, must have known that every characteristic achievement he attributed to the Christ Jesus he proclaimed; namely: His mystical origin; His birth by a virgin, His descent into the flesh, His being seen of the angels and received up into glory, as he writes to Timothy, had previously been attributed to many other divine redeemers, who were worshipped at countless pagan shrines. If this were not so, how could Paul assure Timothy that his hero, Christ Jesus, had been preached to the Gentiles (nations outside of Jewry) and "been believed on in the world"?

But Paul seems unwilling to leave a doubt in one's mind that this interpretation of his "gospel" is precisely what he intended. For he says without reserve to the Ephesians:[138] "As I wrote before, in a few words, whereby when ye read ye can perceive my understanding in the *mystery of Christ,* which in *other generations was not made known to the sons of men.*" With increasing emphasis he continues: "Unto me . . . was given grace, to *make all men* see what is the dispensation of the *mystery which for ages hath been hid in God.*" (*See Appendix H.*)

If these words have any logical meaning they can be in-

[138] Eph. iii: 4, 5.

terpreted only in the light of the historical fact that all the ancient religions involved this unrevealed mystery, "hid in God," whose "dispensation" Paul, first of all men and for the first time in human history was to snatch from the breast of God and expose to the gaze and wonder of every human being. Language could scarcely be clearer in effecting the announcement by Paul himself that he is the founder and revealer of the story of the Christ, patterned after the universal, Sublime Mythos of the Supreme Being descending into human flesh to redeem mankind as their servant; a mystery which had been heretofore undivulged "through times eternal." And who can doubt after this confession of Paul, that from the elements of his own writings the substance of the Gospel narratives, outlining the earthly career of the last of the Avatars, was procured?

This was the "mystery of godliness," no hint of which could be found in the Hebraic scriptures or rabbinical tradition, and was therefore necessarily a "stumbling block to the Jews"; the "mystery" which already in Paul's time had been ridiculed and exposed by the critical philosophers of the pagan world and was, therefore, "foolishness to the Greeks."

XX

This, so-called, great "mystery," which was "hid in God" and unknown "through times eternal" and "preached among the Nations," is found to be, indeed, the supreme saga of all the ethnic religions of antiquity. It describes the dramatic career of a God descended to earth, enclothed in flesh, crucified or slain, buried and resurrected, to be acclaimed the Savior and Lord of mankind. "I am determined to know nothing among you but the crucifixion and the resurrection," cried Paul against the "Judaizers" who fought for the retention of the simple teachings of the Man of Galilee. In the arena of human conflict Paul triumphed because the Jewish nation

had entered into the twilight of its history. Its day as a nation had passed; its glory could continue only by merging its existence, metaphysically and theologically, in that of the mystical oracles of paganism. Paul was the supreme magician who achieved this miracle.

Had he not in those ancient temples heard the refrain sung in honor of Adonis, which (in after years was described and so pitilessly denounced by the orator, Julius Firmicus, in the presence of the Emperors Constans and Constantius, declaring that on a certain night the initiates in Adonia laid upon a bed a certain image, and after they had bewailed with doleful lamentations the death of the Lord, a light being brought (in, the mourners anointed by the priest would sing:

> "Trust, ye communicants, the god having been saved, there shall be to us, salvation" ?

"Upon which," says Fermicus, "their sorrow was turned into joy, and the image was taken as it were out of a sepulchre." This is the same Firmicus who exclaims, "The devil has his Christs," and insists that the Christs of the devil may be distinguished from the Christ of Jehovah by the nature of the unguent with which the pagan priest anointed the lips of the communicants, which was entirely different from that which "God the Father bestowed upon His Son," who blesses with it those who worship Him.

It is of this same Adonis (with whom Jerome identified the sun-god Tammuz) that Dr. Parkhurst, the learned author of Greek and Hebrew lexicons, says: "I find myself obliged to refer Tammuz, as well as the Greek and Roman god, Hercules, to that class of idols, which was originally designed to represent the promised Savior,[139] the Desire of all nations.

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[139] The title of Savior was given among the Greeks to Zeus, to Helios, to Artemis, to Dionysus, to Herakles, to the Dioscuri, to Cybele, to Aesculapius; and it is the essential conception of the god Osiris. So, too, Osiris taketh away sin; and is judge of the dead and of the last judgment; and Dionysus, also Lord of the Underworld, . . . comes to be conceived as the

His other name, Adonis, is almost the very Hebrew, Adonai, or our Lord, a well known title of Christ." [140]

Studying under Gamaliel, Paul, of course, must have known of Ezekiel's reference [141] to the god Tammuz, whom rebellious Hebrews, following Phœnicians, worshipped as the sun-god, whose descent into the death of winter and resurrection in the skies on the approach of spring were solemnly commemorated by the "weeping women" whom Ezekiel saw, as well as by "the twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple of Jehovah and their faces toward the east," worshipping Tammuz, the sun.

In the pagan temples Paul must surely have heard of this same sun-god, whether he be Tammuz or Adonis, Apollo, the god of light, Krishna or Mithra. He must have pondered even in his youth on the mystical meaning of this worship, and even then by the hint the Hebrew scripture afforded, must have dreamt of a possible syncretism of Hebrew tradition and pagan lore.

In after years Paul, writing to Timothy, finds himself, consciously or unconsciously describing the odysseys of Mithra, symbolizing the sun, of which he was the divine spirit, in his descent unto death and his ascent in effulgent glory. He must often have listened to the priests describing and interpreting how Mithra was the incarnation of Ahuramazda,

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Soul of the World, and as the inspirer of chastity and self-purification. . . . Like the Christ and like Adonis and Attis, Osiris and Dionysus suffer and die to rise again; and to become one with them is the mystical passion of their worshippers. All alike in the Mysteries give immortality; and from Mithraism the Christ takes the symbolic keys of heaven and hell, even as he assumes the function of the Virgin-born Mithra-Saosyant, the Destroyer of the Evil One. Like Mithra, Merodach, and the Egyptian Khonsu, he is one of a trinity; like Horus he is grouped with a Divine Mother, like Khonsu, he is joined with the Logos; and like Merodach, he is associated with the Holy Spirit, one of whose symbols is fire. In fundamentals, in short, *Christism* is but paganism re-shaped." (*Pagan Christs*, Robertson, p. 206).

[140] See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, J. G. Frazer, p. 212 ff., for startling resemblances between features of ceremonies celebrated in the worship of Adonis and the Catholic Church.

[141] Eze. viii: 14–16

the Supreme Being, and how he became flesh and slew the bull in whose sacrificial blood the redeemed shall have their sins washed away. *"Taurobolio renatus in aeternum"* . . . "Born again in the taurobolium, the baptism of the bull's blood, for eternity."[142]

He must have heard that "Mithra was the 'divine Son' of whom it was said that that Ahuramazda fashioned him as great and worthy of reverence as himself. Indeed he was in essence Ahuramazda himself, proceeding from his supernatural light, and given concrete individuality." Paul must have heard the story of how Mithra "was to descend upon the earth and in a last fierce struggle overwhelm Angrumainyu (Satan) and his hosts and cast them into the nether world."[143]

In after years the Apostle to the Gentiles would conceive his own Christ, after Mithra, as one who is to conquer the last enemy, death.

Had Paul entered one of the numerous temples of Apollo, which were then distributed through the known world, he must have listened to the solemn "halleluias" (in Greek the sound being almost the same as in Hebrew); he must have heard the priests acclaim "the lord of light" afterwards echoed in the evangelist John's own words, "the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world"; he must have heard the song of the resurrection as the hosannas of the congregations responded to the glories of the rising sun; he may even have seen the sacred priests of Apollo, as a witness of their sanctity and purity, pretend to walk over burning coals without hurting their feet, a test similar to what afterwards is to be experienced by himself in his own miraculous escapes from torture because of his devotion to a consuming cause.

Of this great god, the sun, Paul must have continually

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[142] *Saul of Tarsus*, Glover, p. 132.
[143] *Christ Myth*, Drew, p. 39. See also *Adonis*, Frazer, p. 253.

heard, yet so described in mystical language as to disguise the material object in the skies, and represented symbolically in human individuality. For, as Cicero, the rationalist Roman philosopher, said: "All are agreed that Apollo is none other than the sun, because the attributes which are commonly ascribed to it so wonderfully agree thereto." But the worshipful masses knew not this and worshipped the great "king of glory" in the imagined persons of Apollo, or Tammuz, or Osiris, or Mithra. And to each of these individual gods Paul must have heard the attributes ascribed so similar to those which one day he himself would inculcate as indicative of that Christ whom he alone preached in defiance of orthodox Judaic preachings, or of other so-called Christs or Messiahs.

The very language in which he describes the mystical career of his hero he might have heard in substance in any pagan temple.

"He was manifested in the flesh," so were all the ancient savior-gods supposed to have descended to earth in human form. "He was justified in the spirit," as were the divinities sent from the Supreme Ahuramazda or Brahma or Osiris supposed to have been. "Seen of the angels," so was Mithra witnessed by "the hosts of heaven" rising and setting in majestic glory. "Preached among the nations," as indeed all the ancient savior-deities were preached long before Paul individually conceived his conquering Christ. "Believed on in the world," as indeed was Mithra, Apollo, Osiris, by millions before the Christian Christ was divined by Paul and revealed to his disciple Timothy. "Received up in glory," as was Mithra returning to Ahuramazda, the sun, of whom he was the ray shining on earth, after he had conquered Angrumainyu, the kingdom of Satan or darkness.

Every attribute Paul afterwards ascribed to his Christ Jesus, with whom he amazed the humble Nazarenes following in the wake of the Man of Galilee, he might have heard in his

Jewish youth attributed to the numerous avatars or savior gods whose worshippers filled the world and who were to be absorbed or forced into the universal religion he himself afterwards conceived and bestowed, whether for good or ill, upon humankind.

Space prevents us from entering into further detail on this interesting subject. But all scholars of ancient, especially Oriental, religions are aware that every feature of the Christ portrayed to us in the Scriptures of the New Testament, is duplicated in the life and career of Mithra, as well as in the careers of the other deities involved in the mystery religions of pagan nations. (*See Appendix I.*)

This was the story that Saul, the Hebrew of the Hebrews, must often have heard spoken on the lips of the temple priests where even the Jews might listen and become, possibly, bewitched by the fascinating ceremonies.

That was the "great mystery beyond controversy," whose astounding secret lay perhaps unconsciously [144] nestled in the breast of Saul of Tarsus, before he had gone on that memorable day into the desert beyond Damascus and possibly became initiated in the philosophy and art of the mystical Therapeutæ.

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[144] In the Roman Empire, religiously speaking, "the most popular attraction, was in the so-called 'mystery religions.' . . . As a rule the mystery turned on death and life, . . . It is a much debated point whether he (Paul) did not borrow from the mysteries for the doctrine of the Christian sacraments. Was his interpretation of baptism as being a death and burial followed by a resurrection with Christ to a new life due to an *unconscious* adaptation of what he had been told about the heathen mysteries? The same may also be asked about the Lord's Supper?" (Italics mine.) * The author leaves the question unanswered save in a footnote where commenting on Dean Inge's assertion that "Paul was willing to take the first step, and a long one, towards the paganizing of Christianity," he pronounces the statement "entirely misleading."

It is remarkable how frequently conservative writers hit upon the very border of discoverable facts relative to the origin of the story of Jesus as set forth in Paul's Epistles and the Gospels, then hesitate to make the logical deduction, which would so completely unsettle the historic basis.

* *Life of St. Paul*, by F. J. Foakes-Jackson, p. 42.

The spiritual perception of the deep-laid truth was what probably sent him forth from his three years of contemplative retirement, with that cry upon his lips the echo of which has since resounded throughout the world, "Henceforth I am determined to know nothing among you save Christ Jesus and Him crucified."

The crucified "Lord of Glory" (the great sun-god of the pagans) whose crucifixion was inscribed upon the heavens, his bright body sinking into the "death" of winter and again returning with "resurrection" effulgence at the dawn of spring, glorified the vision of the mystic Jew, thereafter to be known as St. Paul, and inflamed him with a thousand enthusiasms.

If the character we know as Paul, who is supposed to have written the letters attributed to him, ever lived and was a youth in Tarsus, he must by association have imbibed these pagan notions and religious doctrines. Under the severe tutelage of the great doctor of law, Gamaliel, those foreign ideas may, possibly, have lapsed from his conscious memory, but once imbibed we know they could not have been obliterated.

True, in Paul's writings, a Jewish rather than a pagan psychology as well as pagan phraseology seems to prevail. He writes still with the instinct of a Jew; nevertheless his earliest and his more mature years were spent under the spell of the Greek or Gentile world. His subconscious psychology was that of the Jew. But his culture was Hellenistic, woven of the subtle essence of pagan mystical philosophy. His terminology and indoctrination seem so palpably based on Grecian or pagan postulates that Minutius Felix, a Latin scholar of the second century, exclaimed in surprise: "one might think either that the Christians are now philosophers or that philosophers were already Christians."

XXI

Concerning the specific doctrine of blood sacrifice or atonement Paul would have found many antecedents in the ancient religions. (*See Appendix J.*)

Even in Hebraic tradition he would have been indoctrinated in the teaching that the blood of bulls and goats was unsavory to the Lord, save as they express the heart's contrition of the sacrificing suppliant. Hosea and Joel would have taught him this much; and the wailings of Jeremiah and pleadings of Isaiah must have thrilled him with their allegorical meanings. He knew that all these things were in Judea but foreshadowings of the Great Sacrifice which was to be made for all humankind.

But beyond Palestine and in the lands of the "nations" there had also been a philosophy of sacrifice which so precisely anticipated his own doctrine as afterwards set forth in his theology that it sounds somewhat like an echo of what he must have heard inculcated in the pagan temples.

From almost the earliest times in the annals of man it had been conceived that the gods who sit in judgment on humanity demand some sort of sacrifice to appease their anger and satisfy their justice.

At first men offered the things they required for their sustenance. Naturally animals, which man had subdued and made useful to himself, were offered first while human conditions were still nomadic. When man began to till the soil, he offered up to his gods the fruits or grains of the earth, thus depriving himself of things that were necessary to him; the measure of his sacrifice consisted in the degree of his privation. This fact is hinted at in the story of Cain and Abel; the one offering the produce of the soil and the other the blood of animals. Here began the primal schism in earthly religions. As the eating of

meat was found to be most essential to man the sacrifice of animals began to predominate. Afterwards when man felt that the gods were not sufficiently appeased by animal blood, they offered human beings, the value of whose blood was regarded as more precious than that of animals. Human sacrifice continued to be the practice of religions far into the later stages of progress.

But as man's realization of the power of the gods became intensified, he conceived that only the richest and most royal blood was sufficient to appease the deities. In that way gradually the notion of a supreme sacrifice must be made to please the supreme deity. No such priceless life could be found unless the deity himself took on human flesh and suffered the sacrifice of that flesh for the redemption of humanity.

This notion is found in all the religions among civilized nations.

Of the sacrifice of representative men, as prophetically typical of the sacrifice of an incarnate God, Monier Williams, in "Hinduism" says: "Surely in these typical allusions to the sacrifice of a representative man, we may perceive traces of the original institution of sacrifice as a divinely appointed ordinance of the one great sacrifice of the Son of God for the sins of the world."

The idea of sacrifice to a God was always accompanied with the thought that man would be remunerated for it by the deity appeased. When the sacrifice of the god himself in human form was made, it involved the notion that the payment was to cancel all debts to that deity. Thus came the conception of universal redemption for mankind by the sacrifice supreme, which was that of the deity to be satisfied with the blood of the life surrendered. This was the propitiation for human sins.

This notion was by no means limited to Christianity. In the most ancient religions it is a fundamental doctrine.

In ancient China, Tien was the title of the Holy One or God, and one author quotes from a sacred book of the Chinese called Y-King, as follows:

"The Holy One (Tien) will unite in himself all the virtues of heaven and earth. By his justice the world will be re-established in the ways of righteousness. . . . The Holy One does not seek himself, but the good of others. He alone can offer up to the Lord a sacrifice worthy of him. . . . He dies to save the world." [145]

Max Müller in the "History of Sacred Literature," says Buddha cried: "Let all the sins that were committed in this world fall on me, that the world may be delivered." [146]

In fact the notion of a sacrificed god, crucified for the redemption of humanity and symbolized by a cross, was so common among the nations of antiquity, that when the pagans ridiculed the Christians of the third century for worshipping a cross, Minutius Felix, in his work *Octavius* naïvely replies:

"As for the adoration of crosses which you (pagans) object against us (Christians) I must tell you that we neither adore crosses nor desire them; it is you pagans who are the most likely to adore wooden crosses, . . . for what else are your ensigns, flags and standards but crosses . . . your victorious trophies not only represent a simple cross, but a *cross with a man upon it.*" (Italics mine.)

The emphasis and crux of Paul's theology, that on which he is most insistent, is the crucifixion and the resurrection of a Savior. This savior he calls Jesus.

In Volney's *Ruins* the author suggests that the name may have been derived from an enigmatic term applied to Bacchus, namely, Y-E-S. This he says became Yesus or Jesus, notwithstanding the derivative is usually referred to the Hebrew word Joshua. While Volney's insinuation may be pure specu-

[145] *Progressive Religious Ideas*, Vol. I., p. 211; *Religion of Ancient Egypt*, Renouf, p. 178; *Parallels*, Doane, Ch. XX.
[146] *History of Sacred Literature*, Max Müller, p. 80.

lation, nevertheless we must remember that the cult of Bacchus or Dionysus did in some way insinuate itself into Jewish tradition, causing the imputation by pagan authors that the Jews at one time actually worshipped the god of vine or grape culture, as already discussed in a preceding chapter. While this is a probable libel, still it is one of the curiosities of religious history that the titles of pagan deities did become confused with that of Jehovah, as Sabaoth with Bacchus or Baccoth, and Adonai with Adonis.

It is also, incidentally, another curious fact that the first three letters of the Greek name for Jesus are I H S (Ι Η Σ), supposedly a monogram derived from "Jesus humanorum Salvator," and afterwards converted by Constantine into *In Hoc Signo,* found everywhere in use among Catholics and Protestants. This monogram is substantially identical with the monogram referring to Bacchus: Y-E-S being the same phonetically as Ι Η Σ in Greek. It is possible therefore that the name may have been derived among the Hebrews from Joshua, but among the Greeks from Bacchus, the monograms in both cases having become confused and interchanged. If that be so then the Greeks in worshipping Bacchus as Y-E-S might have conceived Jesus to be the same deity or confused Him with that deity and thus transferred the title and ritual of the Dionysian cult to the Christian Savior.[147]

[147] I have called attention elsewhere (when discussing the charge of ass-worship against the Jews) to the curious delusion which prevailed among the ancient pagans that the Jewish people worshipped the god Bacchus or Dionysus. While it was true that among the Jews Bacchus was indeed held in absolute horror, because of the licentious rites that were alleged to have accompanied his worship, yet because of the fact that, when they were conquered by Antiochus Epiphanes, they were compelled to march in the procession of the Bacchanalian worshippers, were terrorized with the threat that a temple to Bacchus would be erected in Jerusalem, and were branded with the ivy leaf, sacred to Bacchus, the notion that they were real votaries of Bacchus was far spread. So conspicuous was this popular impression that Tacitus in his history found it wise to deny the rumor. "It was a mistake," he says, "because the priests of the Jews accompanied their singing with flute and cymbal, and had garlands of ivy, and a golden vine was found in the temple, to imagine that they

Hence, if Paul had witnessed the worship of this deity in his youth he would have heard such theology as he himself afterwards utilized, consciously or unconsciously, in his great scheme of salvation. He would have heard the priests, for instance, singing the hymns of Orpheus, relate how Bacchus performed many miracles, such as passing dry-shod through the Red Sea, which event was sung in the Orphic hymns; how his army followed him with flying banners, dividing the waters of two rivers by the touch of his rod, drawing water from a rock by the simple touch of his wand, and wherever he marched causing the land to flow with milk and honey. Paul would have heard the priest declare that Bacchus was the Son of God, Jupiter, or Deus-pater (Father-God); he would have heard Bacchus glorified as "Redeemer," "the Only Begotten Son"; that when he died the sun and the heavens were clad in darkness; that from death he arose to life and finally ascended into heaven.[148]

These alleged facts were well known to the Greeks and sung in the Bacchanalian mysteries. Hearing such things Paul must have mused on the strange similarity of some of these teachings with those of the rabbis who narrated the feats of Moses and perhaps the vague dream, even then, passed through his mind representing the essential unity of all religions and that what the Greeks incorporated in their hymns and rituals were but foreshadowings of some profound universal religion that might appeal to all mankind.

Had Paul entered a temple of Mithra he would have witnessed ceremonies like what he himself afterwards instituted, and heard the praise of the mighty god who came to earth as a "mediator" between the Supreme Deity and humble man; who was, indeed, adored as the "Savior" and whose blood falling

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worshipped Bacchus, for this was not at all in accordance with their institutes" (*Encyclopedia of Biblical Literature*, McClintock and Strong, art. "Bacchus."

[148] *Pagan Christs*, Robertson, *passim.; Bible Parallels*, Doane, p. 51; *Diegesis*, Taylor, p. 191.

upon an initiate washed away his mortal sins; he would have heard Mithra declared to be "the Logos," or Divine Word; he would have witnessed the ceremony of baptism wherein the believer in Mithra was buried with him and rose again; he would have heard how the great god was put to death by his enemies but afterwards apotheosized in glorious resurrection. Indeed in the mind of the young Saul of Tarsus all the profound theology and the systematic scheme of salvation he afterwards so meticulously and fascinatingly set forth in his immortal epistles, might have been already, however vaguely, prefigured. For as J. Estlin Carpenter says: "The Mithraic sacraments so closely resembled Christian usage that they were vehemently denounced by Church writers as satanic parody. They were certainly supposed to secure happiness in the world to come. The believer who had passed through the blood-bath of the slaughtered bull was said to be reborn forever." [149]

All this might not have faded out of the unconscious mind of Saul when in after years he became known as Paul. How much the ceremonies, rituals, prayers, hymns and holy services of these pagan temples, mingling with what he indulged in his own Hebraic worship, became the groundwork of that stupendous syncretism of pagan and Jewish pan-theology he in his maturer years constructed to inspire and hallow the recipients of his deliverances, no one, of course, can tell. Yet that the elements of this strangely similar mystical concept, fashioning myth and fable into fact and allegory, in some way entered into the mighty system he finally organized to overawe mankind, there can be but little doubt in the minds of those who analyze it as a psychological phenomenon.

XXII

We have previously discussed the proposition that Paul must have been ignorant of a Jesus supposed to be the Hero of

[149] *Comparative Religion,* Home Univ. ed. p. 166.

the Gospels before his conversion, because he nowhere attempts to present, as his own hero, a character marked with historical features; but instead describes Him only in vague, abstract terms void of historical locale or social environment. Paul, as already emphasized, is interested only in a "crucified god" whose characteristics sustain a remarkable similarity to the crucified gods of pagan religions.

In these days so far off from that period we must not be misled by supposing that those gods, because they are now regarded as purely mythical, evoked no moral or emotional response in the breast of their votaries. They were as real to them as Christ is to the Christian of our times. Though we in our day look down upon Bacchus or Dionysus as a deified vulgarian, we must not forget that philosophers as highly intelligent as Plutarch, for instance, found inspiration in the worship of that god and consolation which sustained him in the times of sorrow and bereavement. For "a general doctrine of resurrection, or at least of immortality, was inculcated in the worshippers; and Plutarch, writing to console his wife on the death of their infant daughter, comforts her with the thought of the immortality of the soul as taught by tradition and revealed in the mysteries of Dionysus." [150]

Such was the doctrine of immortality, dramatized in the crucifixion or death and resurrection of a deity which Paul might easily have imbibed from his pagan neighbors in his youthful days. This, as I have already emphasized, is the doctrine of "mystery," which afterwards he obtruded upon the disciples of the Baptist and the Nazarene when they met at Jerusalem, who before had entertained only traditional views of Judaism. As says Paul Wernle: "Not the teacher, not the miracle worker, not the friend of the publicans and sinners, not the opponent of the Pharisees, is of importance to Paul. It is the crucified and the risen Son of God." (*Life of Jesus.*)

A notion so foreign to Jewish thought could not have arisen

[150] *Golden Bough,* Frazer, Vol. I., p. 15.

spontaneously in the ranks of Israel. It is manifestly an importation. It would appear that only after Paul had overcome the disciples of John and Jesus and converted them to his message that the Son of God had died and risen again, was the story of Jesus, as revealed in the Gospels, developed out of the prophetic writings of the Old Testament, and thus apparently sanctioned by them. But as we have seen in previous chapters the forced adaptation of these alleged prophecies to the theory of a dead and risen god is so palpably illogical that few scholars today acknowledge their validity as messianic predictions applicable to the Hero of the Gospel narratives.

While it is true, and generally admitted, that a Messiah was foretold in those writings, in none of them is there even an intimation that he would lay claim to divinity or assume the role of a dead and risen deity. Yet this was the quintessence of Paul's claim for that Jesus whom he exalted as the Christ. Manifestly he never got that notion from Jewish traditions, which, indeed, he acknowledges to be a "stumbling block" to the Jews, and insists that it came to him by "revelation." But, as we have already indicated, the source of that "revelation" is easily perceived when we recall the opportunity Paul had to hear of it from pagan priests who set it forth in dramatic ceremonies, mysterious symbols, dazzling pageants and mystical rituals. Yet the merging of this spiritual ideal with the supposed predictive utterances of the prophets may have flashed on his mind like a revelation.

As we have seen, however, Paul not only does not produce a verification of the alleged ancient prophecies of Jewish tradition in the vague description of his hero's mission and miraculous deeds, but he does not even substantiate the epochal career of the Gospel Hero. On reading Paul's epistles only, as an outline of the life of Jesus, one could not appreciate that the vague or shadowy biography he presents could possibly be the same as that presented in Gospel narratives. Only after reading also

the Gospel stories and then referring again to Paul may one discover in his utterances vague expressions which in a way seem to suggest an identity between the Gospel Hero and his own. But on deeper study we shall perceive that the two heroes cannot be the same, and shall be forced to the conclusion that the stories in the Gospels were constructed out of elements and sayings in the Epistles. In short, had not the Epistles first appeared, it may be a question if the Gospels had ever been written.

This radical conclusion, however, is, of course, stoutly denied or ridiculed by critics who insist upon the traditional view. It is said, for instance, that Paul sets forth specific deeds and exact sayings of Jesus, which are likewise recorded in the Gospels with such definiteness that the two works, the Gospel narratives and the Epistles of Paul, must necessarily refer to the same person. As says a writer in the *Encyclopedia Britannica,* 9th edition, in the article on "Jesus Christ": "If we had the epistles of Paul alone, we could find a contemporary testimony to almost every single fact of primary importance in the life of Christ—His birth of the seed of David, His poverty, His Messiahship, His moral teaching, His proclamation of the kingdom of God, His calling of the apostles, His supernatural power, His divine claims, His betrayal, His founding of the Last Supper, His passion, His crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and repeated appearances." This is strongly put and to the average reader it has a convincing appeal.

The first fact in rebuttal to be remembered is that, while assuming the above references apply to the same personage as is heroized in both the Gospels and the Epistles, yet the Epistles were written and published at least a generation before the Gospels appeared. Whether, then, the personage of the Gospels is an actual reality attested by the Epistles or whether the Epistles constitute the substance through which the Gospel Hero was conceived is, naturally, the crux of the problem. If the Gospels had first appeared, then beyond doubt

the references in the Epistles would seem to refer, and probably would actually refer, to the same person. However, as the Epistles first appeared and but vaguely referred to any personality whatsoever, it would seem that the weight of conjecture lies with the presumption that the Gospels were constructed out of the Epistles and not that the Gospel Hero was attested by the Epistles. Will criticism sustain this suspicion? Let us see. For the sake of accuracy we will examine the assertions of the above writer in some detail.

"OF THE SEED OF DAVID."

Writing to Timothy [151] Paul says "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my Gospel." Also in Romans [152] Paul speaks "concerning His Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh," and according to the Galatians [153] he declares "God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law."

It cannot be denied that these statements seem to designate some distinct human personality. One cannot, however, fail to contrast such statements with others of Paul's, apparently referring to the same personality, which are, nevertheless, void of all human elements; such as "God, . . . in these last days hath spoken unto us by his Son whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world, being the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person, who sat down at the right hand of his Majesty on high, being made so much better than the angels." [154] "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God," [155] etc., etc.

Such expressions relative to Christ, of which there are many in Paul's writings, connote a metaphysical being or mystical personality utterly contrasted with that of one born of human

[151] II Tim. ii: 8.
[152] Rom. i: 3.
[153] Gal. iv: 4.
[154] Heb. i: 1–4.
[155] Phil. ii: 6.

seed or flesh and blood. The consequence is that theological interpretations of the nature of Jesus Christ have always been confusing and mutually contradictory. In fact we may say that because of Paul's own manifest confusion of terms relative to Christ he has been the immediate cause of all the fierce theological conflicts of the Christian ages. Had he referred positively and unequivocally to a human being possessed of natural attributes, there had never risen any question at all as to His true nature. But ever since he wrote, metaphysical theologians have filled the world with their disputes as to whether Christ was generated by God or was always co-equal with Him; whether, as in the Arian controversy, Jesus Christ was substantially like the Father, or whether He was essentially and absolutely identical with the Father; whether Jesus was merely a man, though loftiest of all humankind, as the Unitarians contend, or whether he was the Supreme Deity temporarily in human flesh, as contend the Trinitarians.

All the torture and bloodshed of the ages had, of course, been avoided had not Paul's own various descriptions of Jesus the Christ, "according to My gospel," been so inconsistent and confusing. Now there must have been some reason why Paul did not give a positive and unequivocal description of the characteristics of his hero; why, indeed, in some passages he interpreted his Ideal as positively human, born like any other member of the human family ("born of a woman, born under the law"); and in other passages made Him appear as a superhuman, indeed super-angelic, being, so like the Supreme Deity, in essence and power, that contradistinction seems impossible. Recall, again, the words of Paul in Hebrews when despite the fact he says his hero was born of a woman and of the seed of David, he likens Him to Melchizedek who was "without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life," etc. Heb. vii: 3.

Why was Paul so inconsistent, and why does he seem to apply two diverse or contrastive natures to the same supposed

individual? A study of this problem may lead us to an understanding as to the sources from which Paul derived his divergent interpretations of the Christ whom he named Jesus.

We must recall, first, that Paul is at once both Jew and Greek, a fusion of Hebraic tradition and Hellenistic culture. The substance of the religion which he conceived after his conversion consists in the blending of ancient Jewish indoctrination with the pagan philosophy of his day. When the first glimpse of this potential syncretism occurs to him, he flees to Arabia, or the desert, his soul, apparently, aflame with a fathomless enthusiasm. What is it that so stirs him? In his boyhood days he had heard strange stories about a risen god. He scoffed at the idea as would a faithful Jew. He had just been engaged in "making havoc" of a new sect among his own co-religionists that aroused his anger because it seemed to be heretical in the eyes of the rabbis. He was in nature so inherently a Jew, despite his veneer of Grecian culture, that whatever seemed to contradict the authority of the Synagogue and Sanhedrin stirred him to the depths with vengeful exasperation. Hence he persecutes the radical sectarians of whom he has heard, yet of whose actual teachings he knows nothing but rumor; it was sufficient for him that the rabbis denounced the sect and excommunicated its sponsors.

But somehow he tires at length of this bestial persecution; the vague thought of a slain and risen god, memories of what he had possibly heard from pagan priests in his early youth, recurrently disturb him. What has overcome him? Perhaps, after all, the rabbis may not know the whole truth; perhaps there is another, a more spiritual or allegorical interpretation of the ancient Scriptures that will satisfy his deeper nature. Perhaps there may be some truth in those strange and once repulsive pagan teachings which may be intimated or implied in the sacred writings of his ancestors. His heart becomes depressed; yet his soul is suddenly illumined with an unspeakable glory; for he dreams a dream that may awake the world.

Vague, disturbing, inarticulate though the sudden "revelation" may be—the vision of a possible harmonization of ancient Jewish tradition with the current conceptions of pagan mythology—which somehow he begins to feel "he was separated from his mother's womb" to inculcate—so dazzles, blinds him that he must fly far away into the wilderness, there to contemplate the inspiration and penetrate its profound meaning. Possibly, as I have said, he found his way into one of the caves or monasteries of the Therapeutæ, and rested there for three years, studying, thinking, analyzing the potentialities of the overwhelming conception of a religion that shall comprise the salvation of all humanity, Jew and Gentile, Greek and barbarian. After these three years of consecrated retirement he comes forth again with the consciousness that he has divined and truly interpreted "the mystery of godliness" which has been hidden through all the ages, and whose secret God has given him the grace to divulge.

As he comes forth from the desert, his first thought is that he must go at once up to Jerusalem and see those Nazarenes whose companions he once persecuted so pitilessly. He spends fifteen days with Peter but in utter secrecy. His presence seems to be known to none other save James, the brother of the Lord. We can easily understand how epochal was this meeting between Paul and Peter who had never before met or conversed. In those fifteen days what did not these two apostles talk about, one appointed by the Lord Himself, the other by an hallucination that overawed him. What could they speak of but the one Sublime Hero each contemplated and to whom they had consecrated their lives. Paul relates his unspeakable vision: the spiritual ideal of a sacrificed and risen Lord, knowledge of which he still unconsciously retained from pagan sources. Peter speaks of the Nazarene, the Prophet of Nazareth, whom Paul had never seen but whose disciples he had persecuted. Peter pales with horror at Paul's insinuation that the pagan "mystery of godliness" (namely that a god had come

to earth in human flesh, was sacrificed upon a cross, and rose again from the grave, for the propitiation of human sins), may have been implied in the ancient Jewish Scriptures. Paul quotes the enigmatical one hundred tenth Psalm [156] as a faint foreglimpse of the Divine Hero he exalts. He reminds Peter that Jehovah had never said to any of the angels, not even to the archangel, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee"; that God made "his angels only spirits and his ministers but flames of fire," whereas to the Son He said: "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever"; that to no angel had God ever said, "Sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

Peter stares in amazement when Paul intimates that possibly the simple disciples of the Nazarene had not themselves grasped the profound purport of His mission. May He not be the very One the prophets and the Psalmist had foreglimpsed in their visions? May it not be that the Sublime Ideal which had captivated and dazzled Paul in his Eastern retirement was indeed manifested in human form in the person of the humble Nazarene? May it not be that He, the Messianic rebel who was crucified by the Romans, was truly an incarnation of Jehovah and that He rose from the dead "to lead captivity captive"?

Paul's intimations are so amazing, so charged with dread and fear in the heart of Peter, the latter will not listen; he is still the traditional Jew and to him anything that smacks of paganism is caviar and fraught with unspeakable danger. Nothing but a miracle executed by God himself will convince Peter. He begs Paul to return to his field and not disturb the congregation at Jerusalem. Paul submits and lingers only fifteen days, leaving with Peter the startling dream which he has narrated to him. But Peter has assured Paul that the metaphysical Ideal which he had acquired in the East, whether in pagan temples or in the Therapeutan caves, cannot be the Messiah, who must be "born of the seed of David," born

[156] Heb. i: 13.

"under the law and of a woman." How will Paul ever reconcile, then, the heavenly Divinity he honors with the strictly human being who according to tradition must be "born of a woman"?

Paul retires but not without being first convinced, doubtless most sincerely, that the rebellious Nazarene, whom His disciples had followed as the King of the Jews, who was hanged upon "the accursed tree," was indeed the earthly incarnation of the Sublime Hero from heaven he had visioned and adored.

But though Peter is unconvinced by Paul's logic and enthusiasm, the latter never loses his inspiration and returns to his field to preach Christ Jesus, the crucified God, "the mystery of godliness," slain for the redemption of the world, for "the Jew first and also for the Gentile."

After fourteen years, when he has set all Asia Minor aflame with his sublime story, having presented it to the Gentiles chiefly, because the Jewish followers of Jesus ("Churches of Judea in Christ") rejected his overture, he returns and overwhelms the entire college of the apostles and the congregation at Jerusalem with his gospel, which he never ceases to declare exclusively his own, not derived "from flesh and blood" but only by "revelation from Jesus Christ."

Paul's pagan abstraction, a crucified and resurrected God, the "mystery of godliness," has now assumed a corporeal form, and forever after shall be known in literature and art as "Jesus Christ our Lord, the Son of God, made of the seed of David according to the flesh."

If this interpretation and denouement of what took place at the Jerusalem conferences, first alone with Peter, and then, after fourteen years, with the rulers of the congregation, is not correct, then why was so much secrecy attached to Paul's visit? Paul's gospel of "uncircumcision" could not have had reference only to accepting Gentiles as "partakers of the promise"; for, as already shown, the acceptance of uncircumcised "heathen" as "proselytes at the gate" was an an-

cient principle among the Jews. That, therefore, could not have constituted the burden of difference between the original followers of the Nazarene and Paul. It must have been, as I have already contended, something far more profound.

Paul's "gospel," unlike the others, not only insisted that those who were privileged to remain uncircumcised should be accepted in the fold of Christ, on the profession of "faith," but also that his pagan mystery, the message of "the mystery of godliness" (the mystery of a god-man dying and rising again from the grave for the salvation of men) should be accepted and preached as the gospel of Christ. Then followed the great compromise. As Paul says, "when they perceived the grace that was given me (i. e., when they appreciated his great success in propagating his independent gospel) James and Peter and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship." [157]

At this epochal conference, apparently, two things of vast importance occurred. On the one hand, Paul first learned about the doctrines which the Nazarene had preached and which His disciples were propagating; and on the other hand, the pillars of the congregation at Jerusalem became acquainted with the nature of the revolutionary gospel of Paul, which he defiantly insisted was his own distinctive, personal gospel, which came to him only by "revelation." Thereafter it was agreed that he might preach his "mystery of godliness" even though once a "stumbling block" to the Nazarenes, not merely as an abstract spiritual conception, but as personified in an individual, "of the seed of David," even the Jesus who was the accepted Messiah of the original Nazarenes.[158]

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[157] Gal. ii: 9.

[158] Studying the text in II. Tim. ii:8 we seem to learn from Paul's own pen that he was the first to acclaim the identity of the Son of Man, "of the seed of David," and "Jesus, who rose from the dead." Else why should he assert that that identification was "according to my gospel"? Note the language: "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, of the seed of David according to MY gospel." Why according to his personal gospel if there were not other gospels that ignored or disputed the claim? If that

Henceforth Paul hesitates not to proclaim the identity of the Jesus of the Nazarenes with the true Son of God whom he visioned as crucified and resurrected to save the world. This Jesus whom the Nazarenes themselves had not perhaps fully comprehended or appreciated, this Jesus, the humble Galilean is, henceforth, indeed, in the mind of Paul "Christ Jesus that died, yea rather that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."[159] As if to defy any other interpretation than that he, Paul, is revealing a truth not before perceived, he continues, "Who is he that condemneth; it is God that justifieth; who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" (v. 33.)

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identity were commonly believed, if it were recognized as a well-known fact, that the Messiah, who by prophecy was to be of the "seed of David," and the "Jesus, who rose from the dead," were one and the same, why does Paul emphasize it as according to *his* gospel? Why did he not say according to *the* Gospel; that is, in accordance with the "glad tidings" which have been commonly received? But his reminding Timothy that the identity of the two ideal heroes, namely, the Galilean Messiah ("the seed of David") and the risen Jesus, was the distinctive doctrine of his personal gospel would seem to indicate that he was the first to declare it. He tells Timothy that it was on account of this "gospel" that he "suffered hardship unto bonds as a malefactor." Why should he be made so to suffer? His opponents are not the orthodox Jews (who apparently paid little attention to him), but the Judaizers (Nazarenes or Johannites), who were continually harassing him. These Judaizers had another gospel different from Paul's, whose chief doctrine is that the Jesus who was the seed of David actually was crucified and rose from the dead. The Revised Version as above quoted does not make this quite as clear as the King James version which reads: "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead, according to my gospel." As much as to say, "You may have heard of other gospels which deny or ignore this fact, for anti-Christs are prevalent; pay no heed to them and 'be strong . . . and endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ,' just as I myself, on account of my gospel 'suffer trouble as an evil doer even unto bonds.'" What else can this mean but that Paul's declaration that the Jesus of Nazareth who was of the seed of David was the same person as the mystical Christ who rose from the dead, was the cause of his being persecuted by those who were promulgating another gospel about which he warns the Galatians that "there are some who would pervert the Gospel of Christ." Paul was therefore being persecuted by those who came down from Jerusalem spying on him, because he was preaching another gospel, "a different gospel," namely: that "Jesus Christ *of the seed of David* rose from the dead," which they denied.

[159] Rom. viii: 34.

And to clinch his conclusion, namely that his interpretation alone can afford that inspiration that will constitute the foundation of a new and universal religion he cries: "Ye received not the spirit of bondage again to fear" (you narrow Nazarenes who thought your Master to be only a Jew obedient to your effete legalism and Hebraic tradition, know now that "as many as are led by the spirit of God are the sons of God"). If you will understand that this Jesus, whom you followed and who was slain as a Roman rebel, was indeed the Christ, the universal Savior-god, who rose again from the grave, you will receive "the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father."[160]

Unconsciously reflecting the essence of the mystical doctrine of redemption which he may have often heard set forth in the pagan temples of Mithra and Apollo, he exclaims, "If the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through the Spirit that dwelleth in you." That is, as my apprehension of your Nazarene leader gives life and power to His glad tidings or gospels, so if you believe that God raised up this Nazarene King of the Jews to make him Lord and Master, ye shall have life also to your mortal bodies."

Thus Paul reveals a "mystery" which lay hidden in primordial religions, religions which even when men yet misunderstood the laws of nature caused them to worship the "spirit" in the corn which they harvested, and of which when they partook they absorbed its "spirit of Life." As Frazer in *The Golden Bough*[161] explains, "The death of the Corn-Spirit is represented by killing or pretending to kill either his human or his animal representative; and the worshippers partake sacramentally either of the actual body and blood of the representative of divinity, or of the bread made in his likeness."

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160 Rom. viii: 14–15.
161 Vol. I., p. 304.

As the spirit of corn became sacramentally the life and promise of resurrection to primitive man, the mystical promise continued to prevail throughout all subsequent religions, afterwards transfigured from the corn spirit to the spirit of the sun, and glorified in Mithra the "mediator," or Apollo the "light-bearer," till finally exalted in the spirit of Him "that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead," and gave "life to our mortal bodies." Truly this may indeed be regarded as a mystery that lay hidden in God "from times eternal," whose meaning and discovery may well have set the soul of the Apostle to the Gentiles on fire and caused him to arouse the world with the proclamation of a revelation which ever since has stirred to the depths the hearts of men. What wonder the simple Nazarenes at Jerusalem were transported by this dazzling interpretation and submitted to Paul's insistence that in that Jesus whom they knew only as the Son of Man, the Galilean Prophet, they shall thereafter find the true Son of God, "even Jesus Christ our Lord," "born of a woman; under the law; of the seed of David."

Of course we could not expect to find in the biblical narrative a corroboration of the theory I am advancing, namely that the recognition of Jesus of Nazareth as the human representative of the Spiritual Ideal which had come to Paul as a revelation constitutes the turning point in the founding of the Christian religion. Had not the discouraged apostles accepted Paul's inspiration that that Jesus who was crucified as a Roman rebel because He sought to be the deliverer of the Jews was, in truth, the "express image of God" identical with the Christ Jesus who had been revealed to him in the spirit, what we now know as Christianity would probably not have been conceived.

However, while, naturally, we find no positive corroboration of this interpretation in the biblical narratives, we do find sufficient intimations to encourage us to read between the lines. Certain statements in The Acts, where a description of the

steps taken for the formation of the early church are presented, afford a rather suggestive hint.

In the first council Peter feels himself inspired to make an elaborate harangue before a great gathering to establish the fact of the actual resurrection of the Man they have known as Jesus of Nazareth. He reverts to a passage in the Psalms which he interprets as foretelling the resurrection to which he is referring; insisting that David could have referred to none other when he said "that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption."

Then passionately accusing his enemies of the great crime of crucifying Him by "wicked hands," he exclaims: "Ye men of Israel hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, . . . whom ye have crucified and slain, . . . God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death." Here is a distinct implication of the transmutation of the hero from a human being into a divinity.

On still another occasion Peter, delivering a most eloquent oration, shouts: "Therefore let all the house of Israel assuredly know that God hath made that *same Jesus,* whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ!" [162]

Now all this sounds very much like a first declaration of a phenomenal fact. It seems to intimate very distinctly that the person who had been known as a mortal man, by the name of Jesus of Nazareth, who had been regarded as an agitator and reformer, and who had been slain as a criminal on the cross and since been lost sight of by the multitude, had been suddenly announced as having been restored to life, remaining for a period upon the earth until He finally disappears.

The emphatic insinuation consists in the assertion that that same Jesus of Nazareth whom they so shamefully had slain, had been raised up to become "both Lord and Christ." As much as to say, "He had once been known to you as Master (Lord) because of His marvelous works among you; but now

[162] Acts ii: 22–24, 32.

we declare to you He was much more than that; for He has been raised from the dead and so is now the Christ.'' In Paul's language He was declared to be Jesus, the Christ, or Christ-Jesus, by which term it would be possible to conclude that in the mutual compromise between Paul, on the one hand, and the Jerusalem Church, on the other hand, it was agreed that the man already known as the Nazarene, should be conceded to be identical with the Christ whom the Apostle to the Gentiles declared he saw in a vision, and whom he had exalted by the name of Jesus. (*See Appendix J.*)

As I have already shown there existed in the early church a serious conflict between a Jesus faction, as we might call it, and a Christ faction. The two factions refused, apparently, to agree that the two ideals which one faction called Jesus and the other faction called Christ were identical. That these mutually contending factions continued to exist for at least a hundred years after the passing away of the Nazarene is indicated, as I have heretofore contended, in the words of the aged St. John. In his first Epistle he mourns the fact that many antichrists had arisen forestalling the immediate ''end of the world''; and ''these antichrists and liars'' were those who had deserted the ranks of those who were insisting that the Jesus whom they had always known as a natural human being was now to be recognized as ''the Christ.'' [163]

''Who is a liar,'' he cries, *''but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?''* [164]

While this does not positively assert that the conception of Jesus as the Christ is a novel doctrine among them, it does at least imply it. And may it not logically have been that very doctrine on which we know Paul so insisted as his especial ''gospel,'' which constituted the ground of conflict and forced

[163] Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God. I Jno. v: 1.

[164] I Jno. ii: 22.

many of those who had been following Jesus of Nazareth to leave the ranks of the church when it accepted Paul's innovation? As in Asia, where he tells Timothy "they all turned away from him." I Tim. i: 15.

XXIII

As to Paul's references to the poverty of Jesus, his Messiahship, moral teachings, proclamation of the Kingdom of God, etc., referred to in the *Britannica* article, I have already shown that these references are either of a general character, not necessarily applying to the Galilean, or failing utterly, by quotation or direct attribution to Jesus, to show that Paul had in mind the Hero portrayed in the Gospels.

However there are more serious apparent references to the life of Jesus in the *Britannica* article which in certain particulars seem to indicate Paul's certification of Jesus Christ's mortal existence.

THE LAST SUPPER.

In Paul's reference to the establishment of this institution he is credited with making a direct application of the very words of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels. If so, then Paul's acquaintance with the career of the Galilean as portrayed in the canonical narratives cannot be questioned. But did he?

Let us quote I Corinthians: "For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he break it and said, This is my body, which is for you: . . . In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood; this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

The language sounds very similar to that we find in the Gospels when they narrate the institution of the Eucharist.

But we must remember that Paul could not have been quoting from that source; those narratives had not yet been published when he wrote his Epistle to the Corinthians.

Moreover he distinctly denies that he is making a quotation, for in addition to what he elsewhere asserts, namely that he learned nothing from the apostles,[165] he says, in first Corinthians that what he is to tell them about the Last Supper was "received from the Lord." If, therefore, it were true that he had been told by any of the apostles about Jesus instituting the Last Supper, they, who were still living, would have denied his statement that a knowledge of it came to him as an exclusive revelation from the Lord.

Considering, then, that the Gospels were written and published subsequent to the time when Paul's Epistle had been written, it follows that Paul was indeed not quoting from them, nor even reporting what he had heard by word of mouth from the disciples, but on the contrary that what we read in the Gospels concerning this event may have been copied or adapted from Paul's publications. We are forced to reason contrary to tradition the other way around, and instead of accepting the Gospel account of the Last Supper as original with the Evangelists we must attribute its origin to Paul; they, the apostles, using the key, which Paul's statement presented, may have built up the mythical drama of the Eucharist around the person of Jesus.

As already shown in previous chapters of this work, the Pauline Jesus represents a character in the Synoptics and especially in Luke, which consists of a mergence of the material in Paul's writings with the features of a previously exalted hero. The Nazarene Jesus had almost entirely disappeared in the Gospels as we have them, leaving but slight traces of His existence, whereas the substituted Pauline Jesus is clearly characterized. The Jesus who is now paramount is the Jesus of Paul—a character which may have been dramatically con-

[165] Gal. i: 11.

structed out of Paul's teachings and based on his authority. While, therefore, the story of the Last Supper as related by Paul may have been copied or appropriated in the Gospels, a little further study of Paul's own language may reveal the fact that his reference is to an already existing ritual in pagan ceremonies, which causes him to be solicitous lest his disciples confuse the two and by misinterpreting the institution might abuse it.

In the twenty-second verse of the eleventh chapter of First Corinthians Paul is chiding his followers for shamelessly debasing the communion supper, which by "revelation of the Lord" He had instituted among them. They have made gluttons of themselves at the Lord's table. But this he informs them is exactly what the pagans do. "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils." That he is not in this statement referring merely to the fact that they may be eating the food given to idols (about which Paul would not concern himself for he is totally divorced from the ceremonial code of the Jews) but to the fact, that they are gluttonously devouring the sacred elements at the Lord's table just as pagans do at their lord's table, is seen in the words that follow: "Wherefore, dearly beloved, flee from idolatry." He makes his meaning even clearer, namely that what he is insinuating is that the pagans have their "table of the Lord" as have His disciples and it is from abusing it as the pagans do that he is warning them, when he says: "I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to devils and not to God: and I would not that ye have fellowship with devils." This language either has no meaning or it must imply that pagan Gentiles sitting at "the Lord's table" make certain sacrifices, symbolized by the eating and drinking at this ceremony, the same as the Christians do, the only difference being that the Gentile "sacrifice" is made to devils (pagan gods to the Christian were devils) but that of Christians is to the true God. To prove

this Paul enjoins them that they should not imitate the gluttonous habits of the pagans while partaking of this sacred ceremony. The Gentiles have reduced this Feast of the Lord to abuse and abomination ("the cup of devils") and Paul cries: "I would not that ye have fellowship with devils—that ye celebrate this sacred ritual as the idolatrous Gentiles (devils) do."

For Paul, as a resident of Tarsus and well acquainted with pagan forms of worship, may have possibly witnessed the practice of this very ceremony among the "heathen" who worshipped some of the ancient gods. It is well known, as we have previously stated, that almost every feature of Christian worship, originally established by Paul, is in some particulars an imitation or reproduction of characteristics of ancient forms of worship. A fact not to be overlooked is that in the Mithraic service there existed the ceremony of the Lord's Supper or Communion. "Tarsus was a center of the mystery religions of the East. The worship of Mithra in particular flourished there with its doctrine of the mystic death and rebirth of those received into the communion, who were thereby purified from guilt of their past life in the 'Spirit'; with its sacred feast, at which believers entered into a communion of life with Mithra by partaking of the consecrated bread and chalice; with its conception of the magic effect of the victim's blood, which washed away all sins; and with its ardent desire for redemption, purification and sanctification of the soul." [166]

Paul need not necessarily be accused of plagiarism in foisting on the simple followers of the Nazarene a ceremony already long extant among pagan cults. However, it cannot be denied that in some way he succeeded in fusing the characteristics of those cults with the tradition and teleology of Hebrew culture. Seizing upon the esoteric teachings of the pagan priests, he studies again the instructions of the rabbis in which he is steeped and the traditions of his co-religionists, and thinks

[166] *The Christ Myth*, Drew, p. 184.

he finds therein specific intimations and foreshadowings of the great illumination which has overpowered him. Easily the passover feast of his co-religionists may be conceived as but a prophetic ceremony prefiguring the sacrifice of the "Lamb of God," and esoterically indicating the sacramental virtue of the wine partaken of on such occasions; "redeemed with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ"; easily this conception could become coordinated in the mind of Paul with that of the mystical presence of the Divine Man (whether Mithra, Apollo or any of the Savior gods) revealed in the Lord who appeared to him "by revelation" even Jesus Christ, "foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, manifested at the end of time, whom God raised from the dead and gave him glory." [167]

Thus Paul might, consciously or unconsciously, have merged the legends of Mithra and other pagan deities, of whom in his youth he had learned, with the ardent promises of the prophetic writers of the Hebrews, so that there was borne on his mind a realization of the sublime syncretism of a world religion.

What reference, therefore, he made to a Last Supper need not have been specifically historical but merely a dramatic portrayal of an incident symbolized in the sacrifice of the spotless lamb of his co-religionists and the communion bread and wine of the Mithraists. The fact, also, that bread and wine were used by Melchisedek, the semi-mythical king of Jerusalem, may have enabled Paul to conceive an esoteric interpretation of the Mithraic symbols in the Eucharist, which he transfers to the "King of Glory," whom, indeed, he likens unto Melchisedek, as his mystical forerunner. Thus we may see how the conception of the "New Covenant" dawned on the mind of Paul as he contemplated the grandeur of the Mithraic ceremony, in which the initiate is merged in the spirit of the Divine Mediator, and how, whenever he "ate the bread and drank the wine," he would do so "in remembrance of the Lord

[167] I Pet. i: 18–20.

of Glory." (It is also suggestive that this exalted appellation; namely, "the Lord of Glory," referred alike to Mithra in the Persian worship and to Christ Jesus in Paulinian terminology.)

DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF THE SAVIOR.

How, we may be asked (as implied in the *Britannica* article before referred to), shall we account for Paul's apparently specific attestation of the death and resurrection of Christ recorded in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians? On first reading the passage, there would seem to be no ground left for the assumption that Paul was not referring to an historical fact.

"I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures; and that he was seen of Cephas, and then of the twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once: . . . After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.[168] And last of all was seen of me, also, as one born out of due time."

Let us study these words critically. The first suggestion which occurs is that the verses from five to eleven may be interpolations. Notice the reading: Verse 3: Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. Verse 4: He was buried and rose again according to the scriptures. Verse 12: "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection?"

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[168] I Cor. xv: 3–12.*

* As an indication that Paul was initiated in the mysteries and "saw" Jesus in the same manner as the initiates in moments of ecstasy, note the statement of Proclus, the disciple of Porphyry.

"In all the initiations and mysteries, the gods exhibit many forms of themselves, and appear in a variety of shapes, and, sometimes, indeed, a formless light of themselves is held forth to view; sometimes this light is according to a human form, and sometimes it proceeds into a different shape" (Commentary on the *Republic*, Plato, p. 380; also quoted in *Isis Unveiled*, Blavatsky, p. 113).

All the verses between five and eleven, which enumerate the times Jesus was seen after His resurrection, quite clearly interrupt the run of the argument Paul is making; they appear very much as though they had been inserted by some redactor to make Paul's story harmonize with the Gospels.

If they have not been recklessly introduced by some commentator for this purpose then Paul's account of the resurrection appearances is strangely inconsistent with that to be found in the Gospel narratives. Matthew says that Jesus appeared "first to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary"; Paul intimates that Cephas was the first to see Him, and, observe, he makes no reference at all to the Marys. Matthew says that He appeared to the "eleven": Paul says that He was seen of the twelve. As to this, orthodox apologists say that Paul uses a generalization, "by a figure common to all languages and nations, calling the number of which a body is properly composed, though it may not be complete at the time" (Bloomfield).

This is, of course, absurd; for Paul either knew or did not know whether there were eleven or twelve to whom the resurrected Christ appeared. Why should he "generalize" when Matthew thought it necessary to be exact? A hasty redactor might have made this mistake; but an author, expressing a meticulous argument to prove that Jesus had risen from the dead, could scarcely have done so.

Mark (including the acknowledged spurious verses) substantially confirms Matthew in the narrative of the resurrection. However, Luke, in a greatly expanded account of the event, somewhat inconsistent with that of both Matthew and Mark, says that Peter stooped down and looked into the tomb and saw "the linen clothes laid by themselves," but does not say that Peter or Cephas encountered the presence of Jesus or that He (Jesus) personally, in any way, appeared to him after the crucifixion.

Paul, as we have seen, insists that Jesus did appear to Peter who "saw him." Luke also says that it was "Mary Magdalene

and Joanna and Mary, the *mother* of James,'' who saw the resurrected Christ. But Paul says it was *James* who saw him. John, who develops the event into an extended dramatic story (adding features not in the other narratives) corroborates Matthew's assertion that Peter saw only ''the linen clothes,'' but does not say he saw the risen Christ. Also, Paul makes no reference to the skepticism of Thomas, on which John develops a highly dramatic episode. Paul makes no reference to the ascension, recorded in Luke and the spurious passages of Mark, nor to the alleged fact that, as we learn in the Acts, Jesus remained on earth forty days in the resurrected body. On the other hand, nowhere in the Gospels is there any confirmation of Paul's statement that the resurrected Jesus showed Himself to upwards of five hundred of the brethren, some of whom were still living whilst Paul was preaching.

How shall we account for these glaring inconsistencies which logically cast a doubt on the entire story of the resurrection? Hardly any satisfactory explanation can be given other than that some monkish scribe, feeling, perhaps, that Paul had given a too meager reference to this fundamental and comprehensive event, thought it wise to make emendations in an early manuscript of Paul's Epistle, yet did so in a most bungling manner. The theory of an interpolation seems to me to be the most charitable view of these mutually contradictory narratives.

Either that or the story grew up out of divers rumors in different parts of Asia Minor, and when the legends were finally assembled and published it was too late for reconciliations to be made. Better let them stand as they are and trust to the ignorance and stupidity of believers who would not be likely to dissect and compare the stories.

But even if we allow that Paul's chapter in Corinthians describing the death and resurrection of the Savior be genuine, even then does it support the fact of the resurrection because of Paul's attestation of the occurrence? That is, was

there any knowledge of the alleged event current before Paul's writings, or did Paul himself possibly first promulgate it and present a theme on which subsequent narrators built their story?

A knowledge of the workings of the human mind, discovered only in recent times, which constitute the substance of scientific psychology, may lead to the truth. In connection with Paul's conversion as narrated in The Acts (howbeit, not confirmed by himself) we are told that he was stricken with blindness on his way to Damascus bent on further persecution of the followers of the Nazarene. This experience, if true, evidently was the result of a neurosis resulting from a nervous shock, and culminating in an hallucination when Paul thought he heard the Lord cry, "Paul, Paul, why persecutest thou me?"

In the extreme excitement of the moment, borne down under the heat of desert travel, Paul unconsciously visions to himself an appearance of the resurrected Christ (a sudden apparitional presentation of the alleged resurrection of a savior-god, of whom he had heard in the pagan religions in times past) and is so dumbfounded his sight temporarily leaves him. The incident reminds us of the apparition of the ghost in "Hamlet," when it appears in his mother's boudoir to caution him not to use violence against her. In the drama even Hamlet himself is made to doubt the reality of the phenomenon, conceiving it to be but a figment of his own mind. In the Pauline account, however, a similar psychical incident is recorded as an actual fact, without the slightest suggestion that it might be merely a momentary result of a neurosis. Nevertheless, studied from the viewpoint of modern psychology, assuming the truth of the event, it may be explained as a genuine experience, being, however, merely a temporary hallucination. But as we know from numerous experiments in psychological laboratories, hallucinations are in a sense contagious; that is, they may be hypnotically communicated to susceptible subjects.

On the theory presented in this work, Paul introduced the new Jesus who came to him by "revelation" to the Nazarenes at Jerusalem. Theretofore their Leader was an humble peasant or rebellious subject who taught them homely ethical principles. Up to the time of Paul's advent into their circle these disciples had never heard of the teaching of "death and resurrection" as a situation related to their hero. Paul, by hypothesis, is the first to introduce to them this startling and amazing occurrence. They are shocked and at first refuse to hear him. But endowed with superlative eloquence and a powerful magnetic personality (which cannot be doubted of this great reformer), he so overwhelms and transports them that, even while listening to him, they catch the reflection of his rhapsody and actually seem to see before their very eyes the presence of the glorified figure Paul describes. Cephas (Peter) the impulsive, excitable, neurotic individual would instinctively become the first to be overpowered (Paul's fifteen days were spent chiefly as he acknowledges with Peter). Cephas, or Peter, though at first refusing to believe, finally is convinced and, overcome with hallucinatory exaltation, would be the first not only to think he saw the vision but to communicate it to his associates. Soon after the entire group of the apostles would be aflame with emotional curiosity and perceive the identical vision.

Now in after years as rumor and legend had spread concerning the startling experiences of Paul and the bruited vision of the apostles, the entire story of the resurrection as an actual fact would be developed, colored and variated according to the psychological aptitude of different regions. Hence the confused and contradictory accounts as we now have them.

Turning now to Paul's own account of the alleged event we find a curious confirmation of the psychological theory I am advancing.

Paul bases all his teachings on the doctrine of "faith." The prime essential of salvation with him is belief. But what is faith? Paul himself describes it as "the substance of things

hoped for; the evidence of things not seen." When he enjoins the Galatians to abide by him and not by his opponents, who are sticklers for objective reality and the works of the law, he exclaims, "Received ye the spirit by the works of the law, or by the *hearing of faith?*" That is, "by putting faith in what you hear from me, ye shall receive the blessings of the Spirit." They must not trust the eyes of flesh but the visions of the Spirit. "Ye walk by faith; not by sight." What you see by sight is delusion. What you see by faith is reality. Such is the insistence of Paul. "Having begun in the Spirit (in trusting the spiritual vision you have seen) are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" he asks. Having already seen the blessings of the Spirit "that worketh miracles among you," will you now be so foolish as to have faith in your fleshly eyes and refuse to see with the eyes of the spirit?

With the same logic he exclaims, "O foolish Galatians, who hath *bewitched* you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes *Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified.*" This language can have but one meaning, it seems to me. He had convinced the Galatians by a previous hypnotic phenomenon, resulting from his ardent description of the crucifixion of the Lord (which had been "evidently set forth before their very eyes"), and now impatiently laments that some one else has "bewitched" them away from their faith by which he caused them to see the crucifixion of Jesus. According to the laws of scientific psychology we are able to understand the language of Paul; he is referring to the experience of the Galatians in seeing before their eyes as he addressed them the hypnotic visualization of the crucifixion. After he leaves them, the vision (the conviction) fades away under the influence of scoffers who assure them they have been deceived. What wonder Paul cries, "Who hath *bewitched* you?"

What wonder he asks if "the Spirit that works *miracles* among you doeth it by the works of the law" (that is, in consequence of their fulfilling the obligations of the ceremonial

code) or "by the hearing of faith" (that is, by faith in the message he brings in the vision which he had conjured before their very eyes constituting a simulacrum of the scene of the crucifixion, which is, "the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen").

Thus the entire story of the crucifixion and resurrection, on which the whole body of Christian theology has been built, might easily have evolved from a subjective experience of the epileptical Saul of Tarsus who himself acknowledges a psychosis when he was transported beyond the body and saw visions and heard things "not lawful" for him to report. If the story in The Acts is true, Paul first saw the resurrection as an hallucination (which he calls a "revelation") and according to his own writings indicates that by the same process or psychological influence he caused his disciples to see the same phenomenon "evidently set before their eyes."

He is the first of all the apostles to proclaim the teaching of the "crucifixion and the resurrection" and alone at first makes it the incontestable and fundamental doctrine of all his teachings. This is the substance of what he calls MY GOSPEL, denouncing and cursing any one who dares to question or oppose it. He informs the Corinthians, who had been misled by his Judaizing opponents, that he was the first to tell them that which he says he was also taught (or "received"); [169] namely, that, according to the Scripture, Christ was to be killed and buried and rise the third day from the grave. Evidently they had not heard of it before he taught them; and the Judaizers denounced him, "denying his apostleship and calumniating his motives."

However, it is problematical to what Paul was referring when he says the crucifixion and resurrection which he taught his disciples occurred "according to the scripture." Paul does not state clearly that he has in mind the scriptures of his coreligionists. He cites no texts, as is his wont on numerous oc-

[169] I Cor. xv: 3.

casions, but merely states that his doctrine of the resurrection is "according to the Scriptures."

Now to what "graphas" or writings or scriptures has he reference?

All through the Christian ages the sponsors for the authority of Paul have been searching the Old Testament to discover texts in corroboration of his declarations: namely, "Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures; he was buried and rose again the third day, according to the scriptures."

Now where in all the Old Testament do we find texts that corroborate Paul's assumed historical events thus described?

Biblical scholars have presumed to adapt certain texts in support of Paul's assertions. He gave no texts; but finding in the twenty-second Psalm poetical references to the future restoration of Israel and the universal rule of Jehovah, ecclesiastics insist that the Psalmist forespoke the "facts" that Paul describes. Yet Paul seems to have been so thoughtless of these supposedly corroborating texts that he failed to refer to them. What, then, does this Psalm insinuate? In it we find the expression: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" After Paul had written, the Evangelists, as we may assume, building up the story of Christ's career on the intimations of Paul, quote these words as having fallen from the lips of Jesus as He hung upon the cross. But Paul did not quote them. Also in this Psalm are found the suggestive words, "They pierced my hands and my feet" (the Hebrew text, however, reads "like a lion they enclosed my hands and feet"; see Revised Version, 1881). These texts discovered, apparently after Paul had written, by the Gospel writers, are used by them to depict the sufferings of the crucified Savior.

These references, however, taken in connection with the context of the entire Psalm, reveal the Psalmist's theme as wholly descriptive of the restoration of Israel and her sufferings because of the defeats which she had met at the hands of her surrounding foes. The singer personifies Israel in himself; he

speaks as if the persecution and woes which he describes had fallen upon himself. The personal references are ingeniously employed by the gospel writers as though they were predictive of the sufferings of Christ, and ever since Biblical scholars have used the marginal references in the New Testament to sustain this inference. But this is so evidently a forced construction that had not the Gospel story of Jesus been built up out of the Psalmist's words no one would have undertaken to cite them as texts supporting Paul. Again, I say, it is most suggestive that Paul makes no reference to them; it is wholly contrary to his epistolary custom to fail to cite the Old Testament in support of any of his declarations; had he thought this text was appropriate why did he not cite it? Certainly he was familiar with it and the entire ancient Scripture as he frequently demonstrates. Here was, indeed, a scriptural assertion which seems specifically to describe the sufferings of Jesus on the cross as His hands and feet are pierced with nails; why did not Paul appropriate it to sustain his revolutionary gospel of the crucifixion? That he did not do so would leave the way wide open for the assumption that, instead of this text supporting his new doctrine, it was, on the contrary, utilized by the Gospel writers as a most appropriate text out of which to construct a story corroborative of Paul's doctrine. Paul wrote first; the Gospel stories were written long afterwards. They were edited, as already demonstrated, to sustain Paul's new doctrine in opposition to the original Gospel of the Jewish followers of the Nazarene. Instead, therefore, of the Psalmist's reference to the pierced hands and feet of a certain hero (idealized Israel) predicting in exact detail what would happen to a crucified savior, hundreds of years afterwards, on the contrary, the narrative of the Savior's alleged crucifixion was made to fulfil the alleged prediction.

What other logical deduction can we make from the fact that Paul failed to utilize so specific a text which he might have re-

garded as a distinctive prophetic corroboration of an event of which he is the first to inform the world?

Once again, to support Paul's insistence on the doctrine of the crucified and resurrected Savior, reference is made to the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Here we stand amazed. Why, indeed, did not Paul appropriate the specific and direct anticipation of the chief characteristics and events in the life of his hero, found in this alleged predictive writing, when he said that it was "according to Scripture" that Christ must endure his sufferings? If Paul had been acquainted with the detailed circumstances as presented in the Gospels, if he had known that his hero was "esteemed stricken and smitten of God and afflicted"; if he had known that He "had no form nor comeliness"; that "he was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"; that "when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; and as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth"; if he had known that his hero "had made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death"; if he had known that "Jehovah was pleased to bruise him and put him to grief" as "an offering for sin"; if, I say, Paul had known that the divine hero he proclaims had undergone all these situations, had endured the tragedies described, why did he not cite these texts which seem so specifically to foretell the very events which the Gospel stories narrate? If Paul, who so frequently cites texts of the Old Testament to corroborate his theses, had known of the detailed events in the life of Jesus of which the words in Isaiah seem so distinctively predictive, why, we must again ask, did he not refer to them when declaring that what he was teaching his disciples was taught to himself "according to the scriptures," if by that expression he had reference to the Old Testament?

It seems all too clear that Paul was wholly unacquainted with the life of the hero described in the Gospels; but that the

characteristics and circumstances associated with that life in the Gospel narratives were fabricated many years after Paul's decease in the form of a drama constructed on Paul's "revelation" and made to fit in with alleged predictive Old Testament utterances.

These Gospel writers finding the passages in Isaiah which were written by him to portray the sufferings of Israel and its promised restoration to power, used them conveniently as alleged prophetic material with which to build up the pathetic story of Jesus in accordance with Paul's doctrine of the "Crucifixion and the resurrection." Paul's failure to cite the texts indicates not that the story of Jesus as presented in the Gospels is corroborative of Isaiah's prophecy, and its complete fulfilment, but that Isaiah furnished the material for the story which the Gospel writers created, in elaboration of Paul's inintimations.

Once more, if the text in Daniel [170] is really a prophecy of the advent and triumph of the Christian Savior, howbeit so enigmatical, why did not Paul indicate it as an exact chronological prediction of the very date at which Jesus should make His appearance. Ingenious Biblical scholars have undertaken to prove from Daniel's text that by supposing the term "week," as the prophetic writer employed it, to mean a term of seven years, then three score and two weeks would mean sixty-two years, multiplied by seven, which would make the exact number of years between the proclamation of the alleged "prophecy" and the time when Jesus appeared in Palestine (which it must be admitted is a fine specimen of mathematical thimble-rigging). If Paul knew that Daniel had, with such precise historical accuracy, foretold almost the very hour in which the Messiah was to make His appearance, it certainly must arouse our amazement that he forgot to make any reference to it. Nevertheless ingenious Biblicists continue to insist that the

[170] Dan. ix: 25–27.

Daniel text is an incontrovertible prediction of the date of the advent of the Jesus of the Gospels. Paul was singularly neglectful of so corroborative a text for his revolutionary preaching concerning the Messiah or Christ "according to the scripture" when he failed to refer to it. But scholastic commentators are certainly driven to straits when they feel themselves forced to a contrivance that turns a text from its evident purport (namely the restoration of Jerusalem causing "the sacrifice and the oblation to cease") to a fatuous prediction of an event which takes place hundreds of years afterwards! Paul happily was not gifted with such ingenuity!

Another alleged predictive utterance is found by these scholastics in Zechariah (xiii: 7) "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man that is my fellow," saith the Jehovah of Hosts; "smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered."

But in this text Paul doubtless could discover little to sustain his doctrine of the "crucifixion and the resurrection" and therefore cautiously refrained from referring to it when he said he taught "according to the scriptures."

These are substantially all the Old Testament references that Paul might have used in support of his thesis but strangely failed to do so. Uncritical readers of the Bible are misled by the marginal references made in regard to Paul's Epistles. Some of these references are to the Gospels wherein these are made to appear to corroborate Paul's doctrines. But it must always be remembered that these Gospels were not in existence at the time that Paul wrote and, therefore, could not be the Scriptures according to which he insists he was taught.

THE TRIAL BEFORE PILATE:

To continue our investigation of Paul's actual ignorance of the Jesus portrayed in the story of the Gospels let us analyze another supposed reference to His life in Paul's epistles, which is included in the summary of alleged proofs presented in the

Britannica article before quoted. It consists of a casual reference to the trial of Jesus in the court of Pilate. If this reference were genuine it would leave but little doubt that Paul must have been acquainted with that event and thus dispose of our contention that he was utterly ignorant of the Gospel Jesus.

This supposed reference is found in I Tim. vi: 13. "I charge thee in the sight of God, who giveth life to all things, and of Christ Jesus who before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession, that thou keep the commandment," etc. Now on the surface this appears to refer to the trial of Jesus before Pilate and has always been so construed by orthodox Biblicists. But a careful examination of the text will scarcely sustain that interpretation. We must read the verse immediately preceding the one we have quoted to perceive its true purport.

The writer has just said (v. 12) "Lay hold on life eternal, whereunto thou wast called and didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses." It is to this confession of Timothy that Paul is again referring in the verse immediately following which we have quoted above. Now it must appear clear that the words "Christ Jesus who before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession" is an interpolation in the text. For, as it reads it is devoid of sense. Paul had just said Timothy had made a good confession, before many witnesses; and reminding him of this confession, charges him to "keep the commandment without spot, without reproach," etc. Now how could Jesus witness the confession of Timothy before Pontius Pilate? As the text reads there can be no other construction. The translation in the King James Version reads: "I give thee charge in the sight of God . . . and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession." That translation is meaningless; for it makes it appear as though Jesus confessed before Pilate. But the purport of the text is directed to the confession of Timothy, which of course Jesus could not have witnessed before Pontius Pilate.

It seems therefore evident that the phrase in verse 13, namely, "who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession," or, as in the Revised Version, "witnessed the good confession," is an insertion into the original text by some editor or commentator. Its evident purpose is to indicate that Paul knew of the trial of Jesus, which is nowhere else even intimated in the writings of Paul. Here, however, was a convenient passage where the interpolation seemed to be opportune. As the text now reads it is confusing and meaningless. But if we omit the phrase "who before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession," we find no difficulty in clearly understanding what Paul meant. Thus: Lay hold on life eternal, whereunto thou didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses; I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Jesus Christ . . . that thou keep the commandment without spot, without reproach," etc. Here we have omitted the troublous phrase, "who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession," and we have perfect sense which cannot be misinterpreted; but once the omitted phrase referring to Pontius Pilate is introduced the sense is utterly clouded. Therefore it seems evident that the phrase is a fraudulent interpolation.

Again, if Paul were intending in this text really to refer to the trial of Jesus he failed utterly to utilize an opportunity which would have been most convenient. Here was a chance to reveal his knowledge as to the particulars of Jesus' life, especially of that event which in the purview of Paul was the most important of all. His doctrine is, as we have frequently indicated, "the crucifixion and resurrection." Yet when he presumes to refer to this stupendous event, namely, that Jesus was actually crucified as a malefactor by Pontius Pilate, his only alleged or interpolated reference to it is not only brief and indifferent, but so confusing that no translator can make it read sensibly or susceptible of rational understanding.

Nowhere in the writings of Paul, therefore, does he evidence his acquaintance with the Jesus portrayed in the Gospel narratives. These stories, it seems logical to assume, were written after Paul had passed away and were constructed with a view of merging the primitive Jesus, the Nazarene, with the Paulinian Jesus, as we have already stated.

The Christ of Paul is not Jesus of Nazareth. His Christ is a spiritual or mental conception, discerned in the splendor of a blinding hallucination—a psychic phenomenon. Jesus, the Nazarene, of whom Matthew spoke, was probably a genuine historical character; one among the many claimants to the Messiahship prevalent in that epoch. Paul's Christ is the projection of a pagan conception on a metaphysical screen, a mingling of Judaic tradition and occult, Oriental mythology. It was a conception of a god-man, buried and resurrected, applying equally to Zeus among the Greeks, or Dionysus or Attis among the Asiatics, or to Osiris among the Egyptians, or to Adonis among the Phœnicians, or to Mithra among the Persians, but foisted in the course of time upon the personality of a humble teacher in Galilee who never heard of the doctrine and would probably have been the first to reject it as a faithful Hebraic teacher.

Paul's Jesus is acclaimed as "Christ Jesus our Lord." The Jesus of the Gospels, as I have said, was known to His followers chiefly as the Son of Man (an Old Testament term supposed to refer to the expected Messiah). According to Matthew He was also denominated a Nazarene, though Matthew ascribes a false reason for the appellation, indicating it was given to Jesus because of his place of residence. Nevertheless that was the title by which he was distinctively known, according to the Matthew Gospel. But at length when the apostles accepted Paul as their spiritual leader in place of Peter, whom he supplanted as an authority, they accepted Paul's ascription of the title of Christ to Jesus by which the Nazarene shall thereafter be known.

XXIV

Indeed, there is an indication that for some time a serious conflict raged among the evangelists and their opponents in the faith, as I have already stated, the latter questioning whether He whom the former called the Christ was really Jesus, the same Nazarene whom they had previously acclaimed.

It is of course singular that at so early a period in the history of the new religion there should have arisen sectarians who fought against the Christ whom Paul had introduced. These "antichrists," by which term St. John denounces them, are by no means pagan opposers outside the fold of believers. On the contrary they were within the fold as John asserts. "They went out from us," he says. By the fact that they "went out" he further insists they ceased to be "of us." In short they were heretics. Now what was the substance of their heresy? What did they oppose? John describes the situation. They refused, he intimates, to accept Jesus as the Christ. In the eyes of those in authority they are therefore "liars." This scurrilous term unhesitatingly he applies to them.

"Who is the liar," he asks, "but he that *denieth that Jesus is the Christ!*" Here was the crux of the issue. Is the Christ, introduced among them by Paul, this same Jesus whom they had previously known and followed? Are they "liars" who refuse to accept Paul's Christ, or as antichrists do they declare the followers of Paul's Christ to be the real liars?

This cryptic saying of John affords a vague intimation of the contentious state of the early Christians. The Jewish converts were excommunicated, because they insisted on the retention of Mosaic ceremonials and accepted merely the human teachings of Jesus as against the newly introduced metaphysics by Paul. Says Justin Martyr: "As to the Jews who professing to believe in Christ, would yet compel the converts from paganism to adhere to the whole law of Moses, under pain

of perdition, I cannot recognize them as belonging to the Church."

Nevertheless, it would seem that these original Judeo-Christians, namely the sects known as Nazarenes and Ebionites became ecclesiastical outcasts not so much because they insisted on adherence to the ceremonial code, but because of "their repudiation of the divinity of Jesus Christ." [171]

It is suggestive that Paul's most intensive warfare was with the early representatives of this Ebionite or Nazarene sect. For they bitterly denounced him, as we learn from books written at a later period. When after the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem by Titus the Christians were unable any further to carry on their Jewish practices, they gradually merged in pagan usages and beliefs developing numerous schools of gnosticism. Among these the Ebionites were especially prominent, and presumably held most closely to the beliefs and ritual of the first followers of Jesus. It is from their warfare with the established Church that we may be able to appreciate the revolutionary invasion of Paul's teachings.

"They formally denied the divinity of Jesus and regarded him as merely a man born of Joseph and Mary. St. Paul was the object of their animadversion and they treated him as an apostate." [172]

"They refused to recognize any supernatural elements attached to Christ, as Paul insisted, denying to Jesus the restrictive title of Christ, and teaching that every human being by following in the footsteps of Jesus might in turn also become a Christ." [173]

It is this so-called heresy which John has in mind when he denounces its adherents as "liars" and emphatically declares that "every spirit that confesseth not that *Jesus Christ is come in the flesh* is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist

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[171] *Early Years of Christianity, Heresy and Christian Doctrine*, Pressense, pp. 75, 79.
[172] Ibid, p. 84.
[173] Ibid.

whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is in the world." Observe the clause "not come in the flesh"—here is the crux of the issue—the attempt of Paul to impose on them the belief that as pagan deities had come in the flesh to save the world so had the Christ—God—come in the flesh of the Nazarene—Jesus.

Here, of course, was a very serious conflict: whether the Church should recognize the Christ of Jesus as represented by Paul or the universal Christ, not exclusively possessed by Jesus but attainable by all human beings.

The first schism of the Church, then, evidently centered around the issue as to whether this Christ-Jesus whom Paul had brought among the earliest followers of the Nazarene, was or was not identical with the latter. Was the historical Jesus identical with the metaphysical Christ? Shall Paul's occult interpretation prevail or will the Church remain true to the Galilean, whom alone the first followers or Nazarenes knew? That, apparently, was the supreme issue at the time. As they who held to the historical Jesus in time became outcasts and heretics because they refused to recognize Paul's metaphysical Christ, we can understand what John meant when, thinking that the end of the world was about to come, because so much opposition had appeared to the new doctrine of Paul (which the Gospel narratives were edited to sustain), exclaims, "Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that antichrists shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know it is the last time." [174]

XXV

To appreciate the intensity of the struggle of the Church to establish Paul's doctrinal authority and which continued furiously up to the time of John, who probably was the last of the apostles to survive, it is interesting to read an anecdote pre-

[174] I Jno. ii, 18.

sented in one of Justin Martyr's works: "There are those who heard Polycarp say that John, the disciple of the Lord, going to bathe at Ephesus and perceiving Cerinthus within, rushed forth from the bath house without bathing, but crying out, 'Let us fly lest the bath house fall down: Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, being within.' "[175]

This is the Cerinthus whom, according to Irenæus, the Apostle John condemned in his Gospel. He was a Jew who, accepting Jesus, rejected the Paulinian innovation and taught doctrines very similar to those of the Ebionites. He denied Paul's doctrine of the resurrection. It is not a matter to be overlooked that all the alleged heresies of those times consisted chiefly in doctrines opposed to those of Paul. In fact, there continued to exist a strong party in the Church even in the second century that totally rejected Paul as an apostate. It is known that Justin Martyr, who was a circumcised Jew who had accepted Jesus, refused to countenance the teachings of the Apostle to the Gentiles. "We have already seen," says an author, "the scarcely disguised attack which is made on Paul in the Clementine Homilies under the name of Simon the Magician, the Apostle Peter following him from city to city for the purpose of denouncing and refuting his teachings. There can be no doubt that the animosity against Paul which was felt by the Ebionitic party, was extreme, and when the novelty of the doctrine of justification by faith, alone taught by him, is considered, it is very comprehensible."[176]

The Clementine Homilies were written about the end of the second century, being a romantic representation of the bitter and virulent opposition to Paul which existed even during his own life time. "There cannot be a doubt that the Apostle Paul is attacked in this religious romance as the great enemy of the true faith, under the hated name of Simon the Magician, whom

[175] *Supernatural Religion*, Vol. II., p. 406.
[176] *Supernatural Religion*, Vol. II., p. 407.

Peter follows everywhere for the purpose of unmasking and confuting him. . . . All that opposition to Paul which is implied in the Epistle to the Galatians and elsewhere is here realized and exaggerated and the personal difference with Peter, . . . is widened into the most bitter animosity. . . . In Homily xi, 35, Peter, warning the church against false teachers says: 'He who hath sent us, our Lord and Prophet, declared to us that the evil one . . . announced that he would send from amongst his followers apostles to deceive us. Therefore above all remember to avoid every apostle, or teacher or prophet, who first does not accurately compare his teachings with that of James, called the Brother of the Lord, and to whom was confided the Church of the Hebrews in Jerusalem. . . . This evil one has sent us Simon (Paul) preaching a counterfeit of truth in the name of our Lord and disseminating error.'' [177]

It is well to quote a little more in order that we may appreciate that what Paul presumed to teach was not only wholly at variance with what the first disciples of the Nazarene were taught but that because of the alleged false teaching of Paul the Church had practically split in two. Peter smashes down upon Paul's head a sledge hammer of violent abuse because the latter pretended to have seen Jesus in a vision or as we say today in an hallucination. ''If therefore our Jesus indeed appeared to you in a vision, revealed himself and spoke to you, it was only as an irritated adversary. . . . But can any one through visions become wise in teaching? . . . And in what manner did He appear to you, when you hold opinions *contrary to His teachings?* . . . If you were not an opponent you would not set yourself up against me who am a firm rock, the Foundation of the Church. If you were not an opponent you would not calumniate me, you would not revile my teaching in order that, in declaring what I myself heard from the Lord, I may not be believed, as though I were condemned. . . . But

[177] *Supernatural Religion,* Vol. II., p. 35, 36.

if you say that I am condemned, you blame God who revealed Christ to me.'' [178]

Now what was the exact issue in the romance purporting to illustrate the actual conflict between Paul and Peter? What did each insist was the truth? Peter says he procured the substance of his teaching personally from Jesus; ''declaring what I myself heard from the Lord.'' That, at least, was the tradition, that Peter reflected exactly what the Nazarene taught.

As I have said, all these early so-called heretics (and in the purview of Paul, Peter is included among them) fought Paul on the ground that he was not only not an apostle (''Am I not an apostle?'' [Cor. ix: 1, 2, 3] Paul exclaims in self-defense) but also on the ground that what he taught was totally contrary to the original teachings of Jesus. Now, what was the great distinctive teaching of Paul? It was this: only those can receive the blessing of salvation who put faith in his doctrine that Jesus was God, who came to earth in the form of flesh, was slain and buried and rose again the third day. Because faith in that doctrine in itself alone secured salvation, the incidental consequence followed that the demand for circumcision was illogical and negligible, for ''circumcision availeth nothing.''

It has been assumed, as previously shown, by orthodox theologians, that the latter doctrine, namely the unessentiality of circumcision, was the bone of contention between the two parties; but this, as I have demonstrated, was only an incidental item, not the gist of the issue. The needlessness of circumcision logically follows the requisite of faith; for if faith only is necessary then ''the works of the law'' (circumcision and obedience to the ceremonial code) are no longer necessary.

Paul's insistence is the acceptance of what he called MY GOSPEL. What that gospel was he clearly states: Christ crucified symbolized by the Cross. ''For the word of the cross (the doctrine of the crucifixion of Jesus) is to them that perish foolish-

[178] Hom. xvii., 19, quoted in *Supernatural Religion*, Vol. II., 99, 36, 37; see also *Critical Ex., Gospel History*, Longmans, Green, 198 ff.

ness; but unto us that are saved it is the power of God."[179] As much as to say: You have been taught that Jesus would save you merely through your repentance and being baptized (which was the original teaching of the Nazarenes and what the so-called heretics or Judaizers continued to teach); but "I," he says, "came unto you proclaiming the testimony of God." As stated in the marginal note to this passage in the Revised Version (1881) the word "God" here, as in many of the ancient manuscripts, should be translated "*mystery.*" That is, he came proclaiming the great "mystery" or as he elsewhere calls it "the mystery of godliness"; and what is that great mystery? He himself makes it very clear when he cries out: "For I am determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him *crucified.*"[180] This then is manifestly the new doctrine, the substance of the Paulinian innovation against which the original apostles and Nazarenes so violently contended as represented in the romance of the Clementine Homilies. To make his meaning still clearer and disclose just what the bone of contention was Paul sets forth in unmistakable language what was the distinctive feature of his individual "gospel." "Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I have preached unto you . . . by which ye are saved if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you" [not what the other apostles preached, or any one else even though "an angel from heaven," but what I, Paul, preach unto you]. "That Christ died for our sins and that he was buried, and that he hath been raised the third day."[181]

This then is the supreme issue, "the crucifixion and the resurrection," which is the total substance of Paul's gospel, and which manifestly the original followers of the Nazarene Jesus had never before heard. That is why they fight him so bitterly and denounce him as an "apostate." Not merely be-

[179] I Cor. i: 18.
[180] I Cor. ii: 2.
[181] I Cor. xv: 1, 3, 4.

cause he refused to obey the ceremonial law and to circumcise his converts, which as I have said was only a logical consequence of his doctrine of "faith"; that was not the supreme issue, but that he was introducing a novel and unheard of teaching with reference to the Galilean Hebrew prophet, to wit, that as the Christ He was crucified and rose from the grave.

In the light of this interpretation we can understand why Peter railed so against Paul as indicated in the romance called the Clementine Homilies; why he denounced his teaching and derided the source from which he procured it. "If then our Jesus appeared unto you in a vision, . . . can any one through visions become wise in teaching?" he asks. Then with cutting sarcasm he continues: "Wherefore did the Teacher remain and discourse for a whole year to those who were attentive . . . but if seen and taught by him for a single hour you (Paul) become his apostle; preach his words, interpret his sayings" etc. And the spirit of this bitter warfare between the original Petrine and Pauline parties is reflected in the controversial tone, denunciatory language, and anathematic vindictiveness of Paul's letters, especially to the Galatians and Corinthians.

XXVI

The entire epistle to Timothy clearly reveals Paul's state of mind with reference to the claim made by the original apostles for the Teacher whom they obeyed and followed. Their hero we have seen was not the Christ whom Paul had conceived and foisted on them. Their Leader was one who simply taught men to repent and cultivate a desire for righteousness and forgiveness; who baptized them in water that would symbolically wash away all their sins.

Obedient to this tradition the writer of The Clementine Homilies says: "The divine religion consists in these points: to worship God alone, to believe only in the Prophet of Truth

(Jesus) to receive baptism for the forgiveness of sins, to be thus born again in the purifying stream of saving water." [182]

This was the Jesuan tradition which prevailed among all the first disciples and though afterwards submerged in the conquering gospel of Paul, was retained by the faithful who were finally excommunicated as impudent heretics and schismatics.

Manifestly they know nothing of Paul's "mystery of godliness" as expressed in the Epistle to Timothy, "which was manifested in the flesh, justified of the spirit, seen of angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory."

How could these Paulinian references apply to that Jesus whom the early Nazarenes honored and obeyed? That hero, assuredly, had not yet been preached among the Gentiles or nations; for the Jewish followers of the Prophet refused, as he did, to mingle with them or extend the overtures of redemption. If he had been already preached among the nations, as Paul declared, then it could not have been the Nazarene Jesus to whom he referred, but that universal ideal or spiritual image which had been acclaimed in pagan temples and sought in the mystical incarnation of ethnic deities.

This is the "mystery" to which Paul is evidently referring which he enjoins Timothy to seek in all humility; endeavoring to inculcate in him a mystical sense of worship to which only those would be amenable who could comprehend the conception of a universal savior, that had already been conceived and mystically sought yet unrevealed to humanity at large, as Paul insisted, until he himself divulged the sublime secret to the world. This is "the mystery of godliness" which is "manifested in the flesh," that had been "believed on" long before the advent of the "meek and lowly Jesus."

These are the spiritual abstractions which Paul is determined to burn into the minds of the first followers of the Nazarene,

[182] *Early Years of Christianity*, Pressense, p. 93.

and curses those among them who refuse to accept his gospel, which he so constantly insists he derived not from flesh and blood but by revelation. "For the wrath of God," he says, "is revealed from heaven against all . . . who hinder the truth."[183] "By revelation was made known unto me the mystery, . . . which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men"; "Unto me who am less than the least of all the saints was this grace given . . . to bring *to the light* what is the *dispensation of the mystery* which for ages hath been hid in God."[184] "If any man preaches unto you any other gospel than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema" (accursed).[185] [186]

That Paul was revealing a mystery which, however, was well known among initiates in already existing religions he impliedly admits in his letter of instructions to Timothy. Already in Romans he had given us a hint of the source of his knowledge

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[183] Rom. i: 18.

[184] Eph. iii: 5.

[185] Gal. i: 8.

[186] That Paul's "mystery" doctrine was precisely the secret doctrine of the pagan mystery religions, he makes quite clear in certain of his cryptic expressions, and especially in his inculcation of his pupil and convert Timothy. The secret doctrine consisted in the idea of a divine being incarnate in human flesh, slain, buried and again risen for the redemption of humanity. It was the resurrection of a divine being, a Savior-God, first fruit and earnest of the promise of immortality to those who believe, that constituted that awe-inspiring secret of which the masses were ignorant, but which was vouchsafed to the initiate. It was Paul who first had the temerity to reveal to all the world what this mystery was. So he fervently charges Timothy: "Be not ashamed therefore of the *testimony* of our Lord, who called us with a holy calling . . . long ages ago (*before times eternal*) but hath now been *manifested* by the appearing of our savior Christ Jesus, who hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to *light*" (II Tim. i: 9, 10). (Italics mine.)

He brought life and immortality to light: that is, the secret which was known so well by all the initiates in the mystery religions throughout the ages (through times eternal) but was never before revealed to mankind, my gospel, given to me by the Lord, Christ Jesus, now for the first time brings into light that all may know: to wit: that the faithful shall live forever having been bought with the price of Christ's sacred blood.

On that doctrine every novitiate and initiate in the ancient pagan religions could unite. What wonder, then, that the Gentiles flocked in such numbers around Paul and carried his "gospel" to universal victory!

or revelation. "That I might have some fruit in you also, as even in the rest of the Gentiles, I am debtor both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish."[187] But in his explicit instructions to Timothy he, unwittingly, exposes the source from which his inspiration was derived.

"Abide thou in the things which thou hast learned," he says, "and been assured of, knowing of whom (or of what persons) thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings, which are able to make thee wise."[188]

Now, inasmuch as Timothy was a Greek, though his mother was a Jewess,[189] and when a young man was converted to Paul's faith by the latter, how could Timothy have known from infancy anything about the "sacred writings" to which Paul refers, if by that he meant the Hebrew Scriptures? As we shall show in a moment there was no likelihood that Timothy would have been instructed in Hebrew traditions, in the household in which he was reared. But first let us see to what "scripture" or sacred writings Paul probably referred, other than the Scriptures of his forefathers. Beside the passages already quoted from Romans and Ephesians, in which Paul hints that he derived his doctrines no less from the Gentiles than from the Hebrews, he admits that there are scriptures equally inspired as those the Hebrews adored. He says to Timothy after he had reminded him that he had been acquainted with "sacred writings from a babe," that "every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching."[190] The Scriptures with which in all probability Timothy from infancy would have been acquainted, were those which he had heard taught in pagan temples. Paul implies that these "also are profitable for teaching," as much as to say: "I am teaching you not only from the sacred writings of my Fathers but also from those about

[187] Rom. i: 13, 14.
[188] II Tim. iii: 14, 15.
[189] Acts. xvi: 1.
[190] II Tim. iii: 16, following the marginal reading in the Revised Version.

which you heard in infancy, for every scripture is inspired and is profitable for teaching."

That this may well have been the meaning of Paul's cryptic saying is logically deduced from the prevalent opinion among the early Christian fathers that there prevailed "sacred writings" among the pagans which in substance and indoctrination bore markedly close resemblance to those of Paulinian Christianity. Many of them admitted that there were "Christians" before Christ; for in essence the pagan philosophers taught substantially the Christian doctrines which Paul promulgated.

"All those who lived according to the Logos," says Clemens Alexandrinus, "were really Christians, though they have been thought to be Atheists; as Socrates and Heraclitus were among the Greeks, and such as resembled them." [191]

St. Augustin, the chief Father of the early Church, also made a most positive declaration to the same effect. "That, in our time," he says, "is the Christian religion, . . . called according to the thing itself, of which it is the name; for the thing itself which is now called the Christian religion really was known among the ancients, nor was it wanting at any time from the beginning of the human race, until the time when Christ came in the flesh, from whence the true religion, which had *previously existed* began to be called *Christian;* and this in our days is the Christian religion, *not having been wanting in former times* but as having in later times *received the name.*" [192] (Italics mine.)

Now when we recall that Paul had said he was made a minister of the gospel which had already been preached to every creature under heaven,[193] and that he was given the grace to reveal the mystery that from times eternal was hidden in God,

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[191] *Evidences of Revealed and Natural Religion,* Clark, p. 284; quoted in Taylor's *Diegesis,* p. 41.

[192] Quoted in the Latin language by Taylor from Works of Augustine, Vol. I., p. 12, Basil edition, 1529—see Taylor's *Diegesis,* p. 42. See also Clement of Alexandria, Vol. I., p. 69, in *Ante-Nicene Library,* for Greek philosophers who anticipated Christianity.

[193] Col. i: 23.

we may well believe that when he wrote so confidentially to Timothy reminding him of the religious doctrines he had heard ever since he was a babe, he was referring to those well known teachings indoctrinated in the pre-Christian temples that were, as the Fathers admitted, virtually the substance of Christianity.

It is, indeed, quite probable that Paul was quoting from one of these "sacred writings" well known to Timothy when he says to him: "Faithful is the saying: For if we died with him, we shall also live with him; if we endure we shall also reign with him."[194] (This was a distinctive Mithraic saying.) No such text exists in the "sacred writings" of the Hebrews. No Christian Gospel existed at the time Paul was writing. Therefore he could not have been quoting from either of them. From what other "sacred writing" could he have then been quoting? It is well known that that identical doctrine was taught in the Mithraic temples. For Mithra died and rose again, according to the myth, and all his followers who were faithful would rise also with him. Therefore, Timothy might have understood Paul's meaning (applying this "saying" to Jesus), having already often heard the preaching of the doctrine, applied to other deities.

Paul was trying to impose upon the stubborn and unbelieving minds of the first followers of the Galilean the doctrine (his great personal "revelation") that Jesus had died and risen from the grave; a fact of which, as already stated, the Nazarenes seem to have been wholly unaware; because of opposition to this doctrine he is often discouraged. He reminds Timothy to "remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead according to MY GOSPEL; wherein I suffer unto bonds, as a malefactor." Why should he suffer bondage for preaching such a doctrine? Certainly the pagans would not have persecuted him for this. The reference is plainly, as I have already indicated, not to the orthodox Jews who were unaffected by what Paul taught, and

[194] II Tim. ii: 11.

who doubtless would have opposed such teaching had they been interested; but to the transigeants among his own converts.

He frankly confesses to Timothy, that "all that are in Asia turned away from me." To whom else can he be referring but to those who had once accepted his teaching of the dead and risen Jesus but who have since been dissuaded by the "spies" that had come down from Jerusalem and attacked him.[195] He indicated that he has lost some of his most faithful followers, even mentioning by name Philetus and Hymenæus.[196]

It is manifestly the personal doctrine of Paul (which he always insists is different from others and calls MY Gospel) namely the doctrine of the crucifixion and the resurrection, which gives him all his trouble and opposition. His Jewish followers insist that it is a pagan doctrine; and as we have seen the Petrine party wholly rejected him and called him an "apostate."

However, because Paul also reminds Timothy that his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice, who were Jewesses, had the same "unfeigned faith" in them as he possesses, it is contended that Paul referred to Timothy's Jewish raising. Now at the time Timothy was converted by Paul he was already a young man; else Paul would not have entrusted him with the responsibilities he imposed upon him. Up to this period of his life it is evident, then, that Timothy had not been reared as a Jew. For if he had been strictly instructed in Judaism it would have been impossible for him not to have been circumcised. According to The Acts Paul himself performed the surgical operation on Timothy's body. This may be doubtful, however, as Paul denounced the efficacy of circumcision, and even refused to circumcise Titus who went with him up to the elders of the first church of the disciples of Jesus at Jerusalem. Whether the account in The Acts is true or not, nevertheless it is evident

[195] Acts xv: 1.
[196] II Tim. ii: 17.

that Timothy was uncircumcised when Paul met and converted him. In all Jewish homes, even among the semi-orthodox, circumcision is imperative. Every babe eight days old receives the mark of affiliation with the faith of his fathers.[197] Therefore, if Timothy's mother had been so negligent in this regard (of course his father would have been indifferent, being a pagan) she certainly could have given him no effective instruction in Jewish doctrine and practice. If he received any religious instruction at all, before meeting Paul, it doubtless was either from his pagan father or from pagan priests. In all probability he often attended the services in temples consecrated to the mythological deities. When, therefore, Paul enjoins Timothy that he "abide in the things of which he has been assured and in the sacred writings which he has known from a babe and which are able to make him wise," his reference to pagan sources is evident and could not have been to ancient Hebrew Scriptures or to the indoctrination of Jewish temples. Eunice, his mother, must indeed have been able to teach him very little about Judaism, having married a Greek and doubtless fallen into the indifference toward her co-religionists that the Hellenistic Hebrews of that age assumed. This she especially evidences in totally neglecting the observance of the most important ceremony connected with the life of a new-born Jewish babe.

I have already referred to the fact that in the Dispersion the Jews had imbibed pagan thought and culture to such an extent as to have very largely lost all traditional Judaic consciousness. "It was only after the ancient civilization gave way before the barbarian immigrations and the rising force of Christianity that Rabbinism became supreme even among the Jews of the Diaspora (Dispersion) (*Ency. Brit:* Philo). That writer shows that the Jews had so completely absorbed the language and culture of the Greeks that they had virtually become Hellenists and blended with the pagans in "one great cosmopolitan unity." Palpably, then, despite his Jewish

[197] It is recorded that Jesus was subjected to this rite. Luke ii: 21.

mother, according to the flesh, Timothy was reared under Hellenistic culture and must have absorbed considerable of the philosophy or religion imparted in the pagan temples. It would then have been natural for him to comprehend Paul's insinuation about the great "mystery" which had been hidden from the world and which Paul himself was the first to divulge to the masses. Timothy might have been eager to hear from Paul the interpretation of that "mystery of godliness" which had been hinted at by the pagan priests and understood only by initiates in the mystic rites.

But, as we have seen, this doctrine is foreign to the teachings of the simple Prophet of Galilee and was ultimately foisted on His followers only by the most strenuous efforts on the part of the Apostle to the Gentiles. The "mystery of godliness," as I have frequently stated, was Paul's personal doctrine and it related to the great mystery [198] taught in all pagan temples, namely the resurrection of the body, dramatized in the myth of a slain and risen deity. (*See Appendix K.*)

[198] "The majority of the church—they all accepted Christianity as a mystery religion, which really could do what the other mystery religions pretended to do" (quoted from Dr. Lake's *Earlier Epistles of Paul* in Glover's *Saul of Tarsus,* p. 162).

CHAPTER VIII

ON POSSIBILITY THAT PETER MAY HAVE ACQUAINTED PAUL WITH A KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS

However, a serious objection might be conceived against the theory presented in this treatise. It might be objected that the argument is inconsistent in that it concedes Paul's assurance that, as he states in his epistles, he went up to Jerusalem to visit Peter three years after his alleged conversion, and yet insists on Paul's utter ignorance of the existence of the Jesus of the Gospels and of His teachings. Why, then, one might ask, would it not have been perfectly logical to assume that Peter unfolded to his visitor all the important features in the career and teachings of the Savior? Why, then, it might be further contended, would it not be more honest to regard those apparent references to Jesus in Paul's epistles as actually referring to the Gospel Hero? [1]

[1] There are a few other alleged references by Paul to Jesus that might be well to examine. I Cor. vii: 10: Here Paul merely enjoins that neither husband nor wife shall leave each other. Peabody asserts that this "repeats the teaching of Jesus concerning divorce, saying 'These are my instructions, and they are not mine but the Lord's.'"

We cannot but enquire why, if Paul meant this to refer to the actual teaching of Jesus and he was directly instructed by the Lord, he did not quote the precise words of Jesus. But there is no actual parallel between Paul's injunction and the instruction of Jesus concerning divorce as given in the Gospels. In Matt. v: 32, Jesus permits divorce on one ground, whereas Paul's denial of divorce is unqualified. In Acts xx: 35, Paul says: "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, It is more blessed to give than to receive." Now here was a chance for Paul to make an exact quotation of Jesus, which he purports to do. Yet strange to say no such saying of Jesus appears in the Gospel narratives.

In I Cor. ix: 14, Paul says: "The Lord did ordain that they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel." It is supposed that Paul is

This is a serious objection. Let us see if it is germane.

We have shown in the body of the book that all seeming references to the Jesus of Nazareth which appear in Paul's writings may be logically interpreted as alluding to other world saviors in pagan lore, as well as to the Gospel Jesus.

However, assuming that Peter did acquaint Paul with details in the career of Jesus and with His doctrinal instructions, why then, we must insist, were Paul's references so evasive; why did he not speak in more positive and appreciable terms, that his readers might be unequivocably assured of his knowledge of the Nazarene's existence? As I have demonstrated in previous pages, when quotations from the teachings of Jesus,

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here referring to the words of Jesus in Matt. x:10, "The laborer is worthy of his food." But in this same chapter (v. 9) Paul had already given the *Mosaic* authority for the right "to live of the gospel," and referring to "the Lord" as above he does not make it plain his reference is to Jesus.

In II Cor. iv: 10–15, there are direct references to the death and resurrection of Jesus ("bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus" . . . "knowing that he that raised up the Lord Jesus," etc). But, as I have already shown, this does not necessarily imply Paul's knowledge of the Gospel Jesus, for he, so far as we can learn, was void of such a doctrine, which was after his time built up in the Gospel narrative out of Paul's indoctrination.

If we distinguish carefully between Paul's "Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory," and Jesus of Nazareth, the Galilean Messiah, we can detect no references whatsoever to the latter in Paul's Epistles, but scores of references to the former. And, as shown in this treatise, all such references can be made to fit perfectly into the scheme of the pagan gods and the mystical temple rites.

Those who are interested in this discussion will find in Dr. Peabody's *The Apostle Paul* an enumeration of all the passages in Paul which are claimed to show his acquaintance with the detailed teachings of Jesus. Of these Peabody says: "These passages in Paul are so reminiscent of the Gospel that they may reasonably be regarded as echoes either of the sayings of Jesus or of his earlier disciples" (p. 268). But as the Gospels did not appear till many decades after Paul's writings naturally the latter could not reflect the former. As Paul estranged himself so absolutely from the disciples of Jesus in his early ministry, and insisted he taught nothing that had been inculcated from any human source, of course he could not say anything that was "reminiscent of or echoed the disciples of Jesus." Whenever Paul speaks of "Jesus" we must remember it is the mystical Jesus he has in mind; for he contends that others were preaching a "different Jesus" and a different gospel" than his own. These were the Judaizers—the Galileans or Nazarenes—against whom he wages ceaseless warfare.

when the corroborating implications of the parables would have been so appropriate and helpful to Paul in his disputes and contentions with foes, why did he not cite them? Why, when at times, the precise doctrine on which he is insisting, seems to have had the sanction of Jesus (e. g., the unexpected coming of the Lord as a thief in the night; instructions on matters of marriage and divorce; freedom from ceremonial restrictions, the incident of the shew bread, the picking of corn on the Sabbath, which might have been used as sanctioning indifference to the ceremonial code, etc.) why did not Paul allude to these incidents or quote Jesus outright? Why, in other words, are his apparent references of such a general nature and so illusive that even to this day critical scholars are unconvinced of his personal knowledge of the Galilean or of any of the latter's teachings, if, indeed, Peter had informed him?

Once more; if Paul had heard from the lips of Peter the substance of the message of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels, why does Paul so emphatically insist that the doctrines which he sets forth are exclusively his own, emphasizing his claim by denominating them MY GOSPEL? Would he have dared to do this if the apostles, who were still living, were aware that he was stealing Jesus' thunder, so to speak; appropriating as his own the message of Him who was acclaimed the Son of God? Would he have dared to risk the exposure which would undoubtedly follow the publication of his treatises?

The fact that he denounces all other gospels and insists that his alone is genuine and must not be qualified by any other at the risk of eternal damnation, would indicate, on the hypothesis that Paul was actually acquainted with the teachings of Jesus, that he was bold enough to flout the Man who was believed to be God's personal incarnation, who came down to earth to deliver to mankind a message directly from His Father in heaven. Would Paul dare to have done this? And if he did attempt it, would not the apostles be able easily to expose the fatuity of his claim? The fact, then, that Paul's message does

not bear directly on the career or indoctrination of the Nazarene Jesus but sets up a gospel independent of the "glad tidings" supposed to have been proclaimed by the Nazarene, would seem to prove that whatever information Peter may have vouchsafed Paul on that memorable occasion, it could have had no reference to that Jesus or His teachings which are portrayed in the canonical New Testament writings.

Nevertheless, if the two had actually met, it goes without saying that the burden of their conversation would have reference to this very Galilean, acquaintance with whose career Paul apparently nowhere divulges in his writings. We cannot fancy Peter being silent on a subject that so much engrossed him. What then shall we say? Did Peter inform Paul about the Gospel Jesus, or was it of some other Jesus he might have conversed? No doubt Peter told Paul all that he knew about the Man of Galilee. Peter, indeed, might have done this and yet not necessarily have revealed anything of the life of the Savior as set forth in the sacred narratives.

What Peter knew of Jesus and concerning which he informed Paul might have been nothing more than that one had come, a humble teacher, out of Galilee, and suspected of being a rebel against the government of Rome, as was John the Baptizer; he had been seized and slain, as were also John and Theudas, and Judas of Galilee, and many others before him. Peter might also have told Paul that the message which Jesus vouchsafed His disciples was like that of the Baptizer; namely, strict obedience of the Mosaic code, repentance and a life of righteousness. That much we may assume Paul may possibly have learned from Peter and yet both have remained totally ignorant of the existence or career of the apotheosized Jesus set forth in the biographical sketches of the Gospels. For of this latter Jesus Peter himself was doubtless as ignorant as was Paul.

For the substance of those narratives might easily have evolved from rumors and legends that were bruited between the

time that Paul's letters appeared and the date of the appearance of the first of the Gospels. Out of these very writings of Paul, as I have demonstrated in the body of this work, all the features and teachings of the Gospel Jesus might have been concocted and, finally, after being spread from tongue to tongue, gathered together and published in the several writings known as the Gospel literature. There was surely a sufficient period of time for the bursting forth and dissemination of a multiplicity of rumors between the appearance of the Epistles of Paul and the publication of the first Gospel. Especially is this true of an age of such colorful and extravagant imagination, an age of such fathomless credulity.

An illustration of this possibility we see in the career of an undisputed historical character. I refer to John the Baptist. In his career we may discover how speedily legendary lore becomes accepted as historical reality. In a previous section of this work it has been shown that the story of John as presented in the Gospels runs parallel for awhile with that found in the works of Josephus. But suddenly it branches off, in the Gospel narrative, into pure gossip or rumor, which is nowhere else recorded in the annals of time.

Now, just as a world of legend grew up around the person known as the Baptist, only a part of which is probably preserved in the Biblical narratives, so we know around the name of Jesus of Nazareth there spawned a vast multitude of legends, rumors and gossip (as intimated by St. John the Evangelist, who says that the whole world could not contain the books that had been written or might be written of the words that Jesus spoke) only a portion of which is preserved for us in both the canonical and the apocryphal gospels. The apocryphal books merely retain more of that gossip than the canonical, but they prove the unrestrained exercise of the imagination that then prevailed in conceiving and spreading unbelievable gossip regarding the Savior.

It is no exaggeration, then, to assume that the substance of

the Gospels, like that of the Christian apocrypha, simply consists of gradually growing legends that came into being and were communicated from tongue to tongue during the time (say some fifty or perhaps a hundred and fifty years) which intervened between the publication of Paul's Epistles and that of the first Gospel.

There is no inconsistency, then, in conceding Paul's visit with Peter and that during that visit Peter told Paul all that he knew about the life and teachings of Jesus the Nazarene, and yet that Paul should have remained ignorant of the career and teaching of that Jesus whose story is told in the Gospel narratives.

For the Gospels, even as they exist today, are so palpably a patch work of legends gathered around a possibly historical character known as Jesus of Nazareth, that only by careful digging are we able to exhume anything like such a human personality.

What Peter may have told Paul about Jesus in that memorable meeting need not concern us, for Peter could have known no more of the gospel story which grew up during fifty or more years after the demise of both Peter and Paul, than Paul himself knew.

Paul, aflame with his so-called revelation, hearing of the humble Nazarene, may have idealized His tragic career, discovering in His sacrifice an earthly realization of the "mystery of godliness," and hoisting His name above the narrow confines of Judaism he may have focused upon it the radiance of a tantalizing myth, which had fascinated mankind from time immemorial, but had never before been articulated in any human life. The Mithraic abstraction of the Son of God, Paul was the first to translate in terms applicable to a human being. "The Mystery of Godliness" (the burden of the unfathomable secret of pagan religions) henceforth shall cease to be a mere figment of the brain or mythological drama, and become a historical reality. The Mithraic symbol of "the mystery of godliness"

(the Sun in the sky) shall henceforth be symbolized by the Cross on which was crucified the humanized figure of "the Sun of Righteousness." No longer in the abstract shall the "Lord of Glory" be worshipped in the heavens, but in concrete form here upon the earth. This triumphant achievement was executed alone by Saul of Tarsus, the Jew, through the genius of St. Paul, the Greek. With thunderous eloquence and predominant personality he over-rode all opposition, and, trampling traditions and age-long beliefs, he alone succeeded in planting a religion that has conquered and over-awed the world.

The beneficent beauty and simple dignity of the Galilean's teachings are to him caviar. His metaphysical vision so emblazons his mind he reads his eschatology in the skies, and shapes the pattern of future existence by the measurements of exact logic and cogent reasoning. Like Jehovah, he would compel belief, or condemn recalcitrants to pitiless perdition. His kingdom of God is not the Galilean's—pre-visioning a paradise on earth—but an occult realm whose denizens are the subjects of an unimpeachable autocrat. He said not, like the Galilean, "seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you"; but "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness." The Galilean Jesus is merciful; the Paulinian Christ is vengeful. Paul hoists his shibboleth and commands all mankind to pass under it; defying even angels from heaven to contradict him or preach another doctrine than his own. He is like a rock mid-sea, scorning the waves that threaten its security and dashing them back into frothy impotence.

The Galilean implored all who labor and are heavy laden to come unto Him for peace and comfort; but Paul yearned to make all men see "what is the dispensation of the mystery that was hid in God through the ages."

The Galilean's eyes swept the earth and promised peace and

good will among mankind. Paul's eyes swept the heavens, seeking "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." The one was pragmatic, personal, human; the other was austere, apocalyptic, ecstatic. The one was a moralist; the other a mythologist. The one sought human happiness; the other divine justice. The one centered his interest on man, the earthly creature; the other on Christ, the heavenly vision. In the alembic of historic Christianity the man, Jesus, dissolved; the God, Christ, emerged. The Galilean Jesus faded away; the splendor of the "Lord of Glory"—Paul's occult ideal—dazzled, blinded, bewitched all mankind.

CHAPTER IX

FACT OR FICTION?

EVOLUTION OF THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES—UPPER AND LOWER LAYERS OF THE STORY—TASK OF THE GOSPEL MAKERS—PAUL'S SPIRITUAL IDEAL MOULDED INTO A MYTHICAL HERO—THE ETHICAL VALUE OF FICTION IN CHRISTIAN MYTHOLOGY—"ART THOU HE, OR LOOK WE FOR THE CHRIST TO BE?"

To recapitulate, what then is the final conclusion we must reach, compelled by the logic of facts discovered in the course of this research, as to the origin of the Gospel story of Jesus of Nazareth? We have shown, in previous chapters, how each separate narrative consists of an accretion of rumors and legends, one frequently different from and inconsistent with the other, which had permeated the masses and how each Gospel was peculiarly complexioned to reflect distinctive propaganda.

After further analysis we are compelled, also, to conclude that all the Gospels, as we now have them, are the indirect outgrowth of doctrines emanating from the writings of St. Paul, merged with Hebraic legends concerning a certain Messiah who was one among the many who in that epoch sought the redemption of Israel.

In fact there are two divergent layers in the structure which has been reared that sometimes run parallel with and sometimes run across each other's path.

What we may call the first or lower layer relates to the original prophet of Nazareth, a teacher who felt Himself inspired after listening to the call of John the Baptist to go

abroad and teach the simple way of life and obedience to the Mosaic law. He was in every sense of the word a racial and nationalist Jew, who insisted that not a jot or tittle of the Mosaic code should be abolished, but that its inner or ethical purport should be emphasized in order that His followers might attain righteousness through repentance and submit to the symbolic virtues of baptism. This was the substance of His message, which He began to preach directly He heard that John the Baptist had been slain by Herod. He came only to extend His overtures to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," resisting all pleas that he also bestow his benefits on others outside the fold of his co-religionists. To the hour of His death He did not, in this respect, alter His programme even though rumor once reported that He did grudgingly yield to the pleas of an outsider, a Syrophœnician woman. As He preached and taught and procured a vast following among the poorer classes, opposition arose against Him among the more aristocratic and authoritative class because of His bitter denunciation of their alleged hypocrisy and immoralities; and they rejected His claim to be recognized as the King of Israel. He Himself did not reject this title but acknowledged it when finally seized and tried before a Roman tribunal.[1] At first the upper class was lenient toward Him and permitted Him to teach within the walls of the synagogue, while they still suspected that His leadership as the kingly prophet might result in wresting the nation from the clutch of Rome. But at length perceiving that His programme was not political but purely ethical and educational from a heretical viewpoint, they grew wroth and great opposition arose. As they dared not persecute Him because of His religious teachings on account of "the common people who gladly heard him," they saw their opportunity in denouncing Him as a traitor and haling Him before the Roman courts as a rebel. They knew that recently other Jewish rebels, such as Judas the Galilean and Theudas and

[1] Matt. xxvii: 11; Jno. xviii: 37.

John the Baptist, had been taken by the Roman armies and executed, and thus encouraged they recognized that they could in like manner get rid of this dangerous agitator. They were successful in persuading the authorities with their co-operation to seize Him, and after a brief trial He was executed on a cross or tree according to the Roman custom as a criminal rebel. This substantially constitutes the total substance of the first or lower layer of the Gospel story. This much may be historical: there may have been such a character, known as Jesus of Nazareth, or by some other name, who might have arisen from the group of the occult Essenes to which sect John also probably belonged: a small, semi-heretical community of the Jews of that period.

After His crucifixion, His leadership thus dishonored, He was deserted by the vast majority of those who had followed Him and but a negligible group, alleged to be not more than one hundred and twenty, remained loyal to Him and sought to continue His mission. They founded what was known as the Church at Jerusalem and their leaders were James, the so-called brother of the Lord, and Peter, the vacillating and irresponsible disciple.

The second or upper layer of the story consists of matter which is wholly foreign to the substance of the first or lower layer in which we discover that the humble Teacher of Galilee, whom the Romans had executed, is made to assume a far more exalted and pretentious aspect. He is no longer merely the "meek and lowly" teacher or prophet, but is recognized as a god, whose blood shed on the cross is regarded as sacramental material by virtue of which those who believe in Him may secure salvation in the heavenly kingdom of God. In addition a wholly new and, among Jews, repulsively novel, claim is made for Him. Not only is He now acclaimed as a crucified god, but it is discovered that after He had been crucified and laid away in a tomb He had arisen from the dead and remained many days on the earth as a phantom body to continue His

mission as a Savior. This new phase is wholly legendary and comes from a foreign source, at first not clearly recognized.

For it had been learned that in Asia Minor there had appeared a propagandist who comes in the name of a crucified and resurrected God, whose preaching and doctrine run counter to those who were loyal to the Nazarene Prophet. But rumors reach the Church at Jerusalem that this new missionary had achieved tremendous success. They learn that his name is Saul and he came out of Tarsus, the pagan city of culture and sinfulness. They hear a rumor that he was present at the stoning of Stephen and had been a stubborn and bigoted Jew. They are considerably disturbed and send messengers to spy on him and learn the truth about his purpose. They at last succeed in having him come to Jerusalem to consult with them. The conference is held in secret and ends in distrust and rupture. Peter especially denounces him in the bitterest spirit and refuses all association with him. (This is implied in the romance called *The Clementine Homilies.*) They discern the pagan elements in his doctrines and denounce him as an apostate Jew. The clash is intense and terror of Saul overwhelms the Nazarene loyalists. For fourteen years this separation between the Nazarenes in Palestine and the Paulinists in Asia continues, with the result that the Nazarene element wanes while that of the Paulinists increases. They at Jerusalem perceive that if this rupture persists nothing but failure awaits the Jerusalem church and their devotion to the Prophet of Nazareth, notwithstanding their aggressive missionary labors among the Jews scattered throughout Europe and Asia Minor.

Hence after a lapse of nearly fifteen years they agree to another conference with this dreaded missionary and submit to a compromise, permitting him to continue to preach his pagan, or Hellenistic doctrines, while they, under the leadership of Peter, shall remain loyal to the Mosaic code of Judaism and to the primal leader. But because the power of the Jewish nation had sunk so low and its twilight was now acknowledged,

these timorous Jewish loyalists felt that further resistance to the Hellenistic Paulinists was futile; they loosened the bonds of loyalty and accepted the paganism of the new leader. They even suffer him to be recognized as an apostle although he had never seen or heard the original agitator and teacher of higher morality. He succeeds, however, in convincing them that he had indeed seen Him, yet not in the flesh, as the other apostles, but in a vision or hallucination, which he exalts into a supernatural "revelation." Although he finally convinced the opposing loyalists of this alleged experience, still they yielded only after many years of derision and antagonism. Peter especially continued virulent and cast obstacles over the path of his rival wherever he could as we learn from traditions which prevailed in the apostolic age. But while Peter finally submitted and became a humble associate with Paul, a numerous group of the original element loyal to the Nazarene split off from the Pauline sect and continued to preach the exclusively Jewish teachings of their Master. In after years they became known as Ebionites and other gnostic sects, and became so annoying they were finally excommunicated by the Church as detestable heretical sectarians.

The triumphant Paulinists based their authority upon a doctrine their leader called "the mystery of godliness." An examination of this doctrine demonstrates its pagan source, purporting to be the saga of a god-man who had been slain or crucified and after burial arose again on the third day from the grave.

Thus gradually this doctrine which Paul had been for years preaching independently throughout Asia, without the knowledge of the original followers of the Galilean disciples who had merely acclaimed Jesus the Messiah, came to be accepted by them and incorporated in the details of His earthly career. He ceases thereafter to be regarded as a mere moral teacher, a crucified traitor and criminal, and becomes the God-Man (an embodiment of the perennial myth of Oriental pagan re-

ligions) and after His crucifixion and burial rises from the dead to demonstrate the truth of His claim that He was the Son of God sent by the Father to redeem humanity. His interest is no longer exclusively in the Jewish race, but as well in the Gentile world. This doctrine, of course, found amenable and fertile soil in which to grow when, soon after the crucifixion of Jesus, the Jewish nation was conquered and scattered broadcast throughout the earth.

Paul was the first among the apostles to proclaim the doctrine of a crucified and resurrected God-Man-Savior of humanity; a claim not originally made by His disciples for Jesus, who was known amongst them merely as the Prophet of Nazareth and hailed as the Messiah. It was Paul who introduced the doctrine as "the mystery of godliness," whose secret meaning he claims to be the first of all mankind to divulge to the world.

Finally, after the disciples yield to Paul's persuasiveness and the demonstration of his tremendous influence and merge their own Gospel with that of his, legend rapidly disseminates the story gathering rumor on rumor which sometime will be assembled together and organized into a narrative that shall survive the ages. The Gospels as we now have them were probably not published for at least a hundred years after Paul's decease. For we find as late as the time of Justin Martyr, the latter half of the second century, that the Gospels even then were unknown to him; although the legends which had been disseminated concerning the Paulinian God-Man-Savior were well known in his time and were probably exploited in a lost gospel known then as "The Gospel according to the Hebrews." [2]

Not until modern scholarship ferreted out the original source of the current Gospels were we aware of the totally unhistorical foundation of the story of Jesus which they present, notwithstanding the vague trace therein of an actual historical

[2] See *Supernatural Religion*, Vol. I., ch. 3.

character around which the Gospel writers have draped the garments of a mythical figure.

The task which the Gospel makers undertook, long after the destruction of Jerusalem and after what memory remained of the phantom figure of a world-redeemer, objectively visualized by Paul, was to construct an eschatological scheme which would harmonize susceptible intimations of Jewish Scripture with the characteristics of the Paulinian Hero. The spiritual lineaments and vague programme of achievements, attributed by the Apostle to the Gentiles to his metaphysical abstraction or phantom-Redeemer, must be rooted in the soil of Hebrew tradition and as far as possible disguise its derivation from pagan sources. Hence the meticulous search for texts in the ancient Scripture, in the gospel-making age, on which could be reared a human personification of the mystical phenomenon Paul had projected upon the dissolving atmosphere of nationalistic Judaism. "The mystery of godliness"—the supreme riddle of ethnic religions which had mystified the ages,—must be dragged forth from the secret crypts of pagan temples and solved with the key of foreshadowing Hebraic prophecy, whose echoes had long resounded in the schools and synagogues of "the chosen people."

The multiplied rumors, that for decades had filled the air relative to a disappointing leader, the revival of whose memory was now sought as the incarnation of Paul's hero, were gradually assembled in semi-biographical sketches, re-enforced with alleged prophetic utterances in the Hebrew Scriptures, which presumed to foretell the advent of the promised Messiah. A vague and undiscriminating outline only of a possible historic character remained in these propagandist sketches (the extant Gospels), merged and almost completely absorbed in the heroic figure of the Paulinian epic.

This was the epic that had haunted the imagination of poets, prophets and mystics from the dawn of human history. It was voiced and vaguely interpreted in the tradition which had

descended from the Homeric age among the Greeks, adumbrated in the sagas of Scandinavian mythology, in the legends of the Phrygian Attis and the Phœnician Adonis, exalted in the sublime ritual of Osiris and organized in the processional grandeurs of the Eleusinian mysteries. It first occurred to the mind of man on witnessing the birth and growth of the humble grain of the fields, the waving wheat and the sheaves of golden corn. It was sung in the hymns consecrated to Demeter, the goddess of the ripening maize and the crown of gold that topped the stocks, and to Persephone, goddess of the young grain that sprung from the mature sheaves whose fruitage lay asleep through winter months and sprung to life in the fallow fields of the springtime. It was voiced unconsciously by Paul in solemn words: "That which thyself sowest is not quickened except it die; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but a bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other kind."

It was the epic of the transcendent dream of immortality, the grain that though seemingly dying in the soil (Demeter's soul asleep in the earth) would rise again to life (Persephone's spirit released from Pluto's realm) to glorify the fields. "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in glory; it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." It was the epic of the death and resurrection of deities, after whose pattern man himself shall be transported from the dissolution of the grave to the resplendence of heaven—an epic of the quenchless hope that sprung eternal in the breast of man.

The task of the gospel makers was to merge Paul's "mystery of godliness," consciously or unconsciously derived from this perennial epic, with susceptible passages of Hebrew Scripture which vaguely intimated the eternal myth. The solemn death and resurrection glory of a sublime Savior-God must be discerned in the enigmatical prophecies foretelling the Messiah, whose spiritual characteristics and achievements must reflect Paul's mystical hero or metaphysical abstraction.

Hence the meticulous search for texts in the ancient writings by the gospel makers, for material out of which could be constructed a human personification of Paul's mystical phenomenon. What he saw in a heavenly vision must be humanized on earth. What he "saw" in the flash of a momentary illumination must be materialized in flesh and blood. Just as the "mystery" was once personified in the mythical Dionysus or Osiris, or Asklepios, and in scores of ancient deities who were believed to have labored on earth for the beatification and redemption of mankind, so at last must it be personified in the Man of Galilee; and thus once for all "openly set forth crucified" before the eyes of men, the occult Ideal that "was hid in God from times eternal," would be triumphantly divulged.

Thus was the man, Jesus, transubstantiated into the god, Christ! Whoever this Jesus may have been, or whether or not traces of His historical reality still linger in the Gospel stories, He has been so completely absorbed in the heroic figure of the Paulinian epic that He is virtually lost forever in the annals of time. The Jesus of current Christianity is the Christ of Paul. The obscure Nazarene, who may once have laid claim to Messiahship or kingship among the Jews, who may have been inflamed with a moral madness that swept Him to death on a cross as a Roman rebel and criminal, like Theudas and Judas the Galilean, or thousands of others who followed misguided fanatical leaders of that epoch, has become in the Gospel narratives a mere lay figure clothed with a garment woven of the vague material of Hebrew tradition and the mystical elements of pagan lore.

The fact, however, that the Jesus of the Gospels may be dissolved as an historical character, or discerned to be nothing more than a mythical personification of a metaphysical concept, an assumed personalization or materialization of a mystical ideal, in no wise neutralizes the beauty and exaltedness of the literary creation. Theologically, of course, such critical analysis is utterly devastating; it leaves not a shred of the fantastic

eschatological structure reared in the name of the Man-God Jesus, on whose actual existence the redemption of the human race depends. But ethically, spiritually, esthetically nothing of the beauty is lost, nothing of the moral grandeur, nothing of the exalted inspiration. The excellence of the teachings of Jesus, even though they be but the gathered pearls of ancient wisdom strung upon a single thread, the nobility of His character, the friendliness of His presence, the tenderness and democratic simplicity of His personality still remain.

What is more, the dynamic inspiration is rather intensified; for if, indeed, He concocted no mechanism of supernatural salvation; if the phantasy of a promised paradise is dissolved into "airy nothingness"; if the dramatic crucifixion and the dazzling resurrection of His actual body fade in the twilight of a universal myth, bastard offspring of man's ignorance and natural phenomena; nevertheless, there still remain the wholesomeness of His counsels, the poetic imagery of His preachments, the simplicity and sweet intimacy of daily contact, to guide, inspire, caution and encourage the wayfarers of earth through the jungles and tangled forests of human experience.

For be this figure but a figment of the imagination, a creation of human fiction, the dramatization of an unhistorical personality, yet the very fact that it is written and recorded and may live eternally in human memory, makes its recital a source of hope and ethical inspiration. True, its literalness may blind and misguide, for the letter killeth. But interpreted freely, looked upon as a focal center of variable human conduct, as a dramatic consummation of human strife and hope, as a tragedy infinitely articulate with suffering and woe, with defiance of fate and promise of joy, it quickens, inspires, illuminates. It is a concrete example, after which each human life may be patterned despite its distance from perfection; whose duplication, howbeit an impossibility in this care-worn world, affords a glorious goal to lure and swiften the feet of faltering man.

Fiction has its noble uses as well as fact. Indeed fiction may be the more useful in that it is permitted to portray a character beyond the attainment of flesh and blood, yet so intriguing and fascinating, howbeit impossible of attainment, it cannot fail when lifted up to draw all men to it. Though the letter of fact may be death to myth, the spirit of fiction may give life to it.

In the light of this interpretation, though the supposed historical Jesus of Nazareth, as portrayed in the canonical Gospels, becomes but the fictional personification of Paul's metaphysical eschatology; though it prove to be but the culminating and supreme hero in the drama of an age-long dream, whose adumbration was glimpsed at the very dawn of human thought; nevertheless, its humanization and dramatic portrayal in recorded literature proves, in the end, beneficial rather than deleterious in the evolution of human culture.

Despite the metaphysical perversions and dogmatic distortions of the sublime dream which has haunted mankind through countless ages; despite the fact that ignoble forces in human history have seized upon the heroic figure of the Gospels and utilized it as an instrumentality wherewith to demean the natural aspirations of the human heart; to oppose progress and dishearten the courage of aggressive intellectuality; to institute whole epochs of retrogression and dehumanization, misusing art, dethroning science and clouding the mind of man with the darkness of bigotry and ignorance; despite these deplorable facts that too harshly punctuated the history of Christianity; nevertheless, in the end the beautifully conceived character of Jesus, in its human and natural aspects, can never be obliterated, but will evermore live in memory and awaken the noblest impulses of the human breast.

For finally truth will prevail; what there is of love, beauty, justice, moral grandeur and nobility in the Christ of Paul, as portrayed in the Gospels, will neutralize and disestablish the barbarities and perverse autocratic power, acclaimed and ex-

ercised in the name of an artificial Jesus. Whether Paul or Jesus "planted," if "God gives the increase," in the final betterment of humanity, the verdict of history will decide.

And still the measure of our needs
Outgrows the cramping bounds of creeds;
The manna gathered yesterday
Already savors of decay;
Doubts to the world's child-heart unknown
Question us now from star to stone;
Too little or too much we know,
And sight is swift and faith is slow;
The power is lost to self-deceive
With shallow forms of make-believe.
We walk at high noon, and the bells
Call to a thousand oracles,
But the sound deafens and the light
Is stronger than our dazzled sight;
The letters of the sacred Book
Glimmer and swim beneath our look;
Still struggles in the Age's breast
With deepening agony of quest,
The old entreaty: Art Thou He,
Or look we for the Christ to be.

WHITTIER.

THE END

APPENDIX

APPENDICES

Appendix A, see Prefatory Note, page 1

In his Life of Jesus, Strauss says: "The results of the inquiry which we have now brought to a close have apparently annihilated the greatest and most valuable part of that which the Christian has been wont to believe concerning his Savior" (p. 757, George Eliot's translation, one vol. edition, Swan, Sonnenschein, London, 1892).

Again: "This is the key to the whole of Christology that, as subject of the predicate which the Church assigns to Christ, we have instead of an *individual an idea*" (p. 780).

Once more: "The Church refers her Christology to an individual, who existed historically at a certain period: the speculative theologian to an idea, which only attains existence in the totality of individuals; by the church the evangelical narratives are received as history; by the critical theologian they are regarded for the most part as mere myth" (p. 782).

George Brandes in "The Jesus Myth" says: "Every student of ancient religious rites knows full well that the ideal image of one unjustly tortured or martyred; of one tormented for the very reason that he is good and righteous; of one chosen as a victim by human malice and bearing his suffering for the sake of the rest . . . that this image had been drawn with devoted passion long before the time when the historical Jesus is supposed to have come into this world. The figure of the suffering Messiah was the personification of the Jewish people as oppressed and maltreated by their neighbors, and yet as stronger than these because they were the mouthpieces of truth and justice. . . . In other words, the Christ figure as an ideal of spiritual superiority, of love for humanity, of charity and purity, was many centuries older than the noble minded Galilean man of the people who, nineteen hundred years ago, was

said to have given historic embodiment to this prototype. The same figure will survive him for many centuries to come, even if he, as now seems likely, should never have existed."

Appendix B, see page 24

"We know from a famous letter of Pliny the Younger addressed to the Emperor Trajan in 112 A. D. that by the beginning of our era, less than a hundred years after the Founder's death, Christianity had made such strides in Bithynia and Pontus that not only cities but villages and rural districts were affected by it, and that multitudes of both sexes and of all ages and every rank professed its tenets. . . . It is obvious, therefore that the new faith had elements in it which appealed powerfully to the Asiatic mind.[1] What these elements were the

[1] From Pliny's letter, if its genuineness be admitted, which is doubted by some scholars, it would appear that the Christian religion was already far spread in the first quarter of the second century, while by the consensus of many modern critics, at that time the gospel stories were not yet in circulation, or possibly in existence.

If, then, the Christian religion, namely the worship of Christ as God, were already far spread at that time, does it mean the religion of Jesus or a religion founded on another name? It is a noticeable fact that in Pliny's famous letter the name of Jesus does not appear but only that of Christ. He says: "The whole of what was laid to their charge, whether it were a crime or a mere error, consisted in this: that they made it a practice on a stated day to meet together before daylight to sing hymns with responses to Christ as a god, and to bind themselves by a solemn institution not to any wrong act," etc. All through the letter the name only of Christ is used, together with the name Christians.

Now, inasmuch as Pliny was the governor of Bithynia and Pontus, regions where Paul's evangelism was prosecuted before he had become acquainted with the evangelists who were sent out from the church of Jerusalem to spread the religion of Jesus, or the Jewish ethical reformation which was instituted in His name, it would seem that Pliny's letter lends color to the thesis developed in this work, namely, that Paul's religion, "Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block and unto the Greeks foolishness," had spread abroad, throughout this region, before the halo of his ideal was cast about the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Pliny apparently knows nothing of this latter personage, or at least gives us no intimation that the religion which he was condemning bore any relation to Him. He referred to a religion founded in honor of a certain name, Christ, whose followers proclaimed him a god, of whom the original Nazarenes, as we contend, knew nothing till Paul foisted his name upon them. This Christ in Paul's purview was not a human being, but like Melchisedek, "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life" (Heb. vii: 3), for which Marcion contends in his *Antithesis* in the second century.

present investigation has somewhat disclosed. We have seen that the conception of a dying and risen god was no new one in these regions. All over Western Asia from time immemorial the mournful death and happy resurrection of a divine being appear to have been annually celebrated with alternate rites of bitter lamentation and exultant joy. . . . In name they varied from place to place, but in substance they were all alike. A man, whom the fond imagination of the worshippers invested with the attributes of a god gave his life for the world; after infusing from his own body a fresh current of vital energy into the stagnant veins of nature, he was cut off from among the living before his failing strength should initiate a universal decay, and his place was taken by another who played the ever recurring drama of the divine resurrection and death. . . . A chain of causes . . . determined that the part of the dying god in this annual drama should be thrust upon Jesus of Nazareth, whom the enemies He had made in high places by His outspoken strictures were resolved to put out of the way. They succeeded in ridding themselves of a troublesome and popular preacher; but the very step by which they fancied they had stamped out His revolutionary doctrines contributed more than anything else to scatter them broadcast not only over Judea but over Asia; for it impressed upon what had been hitherto mainly an ethical mission the character of a divine revelation culminating in the passion and death of the Incarnate Son of the Divine Father. . . . In the great army of martyrs who in many ages and in many lands

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Paul's religion, to which Pliny seems to be referring, consisted of those very mystical elements that constituted the secret of the universal religion which had spread "all over Western Asia from time immemorial," namely, "the mournful death and happy resurrection of a divine being." Paul's office, he himself declares, was to reveal the meaning and nature of this mystical secret, "hid in God from times eternal," to all mankind that they may become "fellow members of the body of Christ."

He makes it so clear that all his labors are directed to this end, that is to reveal a secret which throughout the ages had been adumbrated in every ethnic religion, that it amazes us we have been so long blind to his intimations. Mark his words to the Ephesians: "For this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ, for you *Gentiles*, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that *by revelation he made known unto me the mystery . . . which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men*" (Eph. iii: 1–5).

How such a doctrine bears no relation whatsoever to the simple teaching of repentance and righteousness preached by the Galilean it requires no disquisition to reveal.

. . . have died a cruel death in the character of gods, the devout Christian will doubtless discern types and forerunners of the coming Savior. . . . The skeptic, on the other hand with equal confidence will reduce Jesus of Nazareth to the level of a multitude of other victims of barbarous superstition, and will see in Him no more than a moral teacher, whom the fortunate accident of His execution invested with the crown, not merely of a martyr but of a god."[2]

It is the contention of the writer of the present volume, that it was Saul of Tarsus who alone converted the age-known sacred drama from a mere holy rite among the Jews and ultimately among the Gentiles into the doctrines which now constitute the basis of current Christianity. Paul superimposed upon the hero of the drama, the Crucified Agitator, whom the Pharisees caused to be killed as a malefactor against Rome, the worshipful attribute of a divinity. And in accordance with the substance of the universal pagan drama above described by Dr. Frazer he transformed Jesus from a mere preacher of righteousness and morality into the Sacrificed Son of God, whom, ever since, His votaries have worshipped as such.

Appendix C, see page 65

"The God of the Hebrews plainly regarded the first born of men and the firstlings of animals as His own, and required that they should be made over to Him. But how?

"Here a distinction is drawn between sheep, oxen, and goats on the one hand, and men and asses on the other; the firstlings of the former were always sacrificed, the firstlings of the latter were generally redeemed. The flesh (of the sacrificed animals) doubtless went to the Levites who consumed it instead of the deity whom they represented. On the other hand the ass was not sacrificed by the Israelites probably because they did not eat the animal themselves and hence concluded that God did not do so either. Still the firstling ass, like all the other firstlings was sacred to the Deity and since it was not sacrificed to Him, He had to receive an equivalent for it. In other words the ass had to be redeemed and the price of the redemption was a lamb which was burnt as a vicarious sacrifice instead of

[2] *The Golden Bough: The Scape Goat,* by J. G. Frazer, p. 420, ff.

the ass, on the hypothesis, apparently, that roast lamb was more palatable to the Supreme Being than roast donkey.'' [3]

Appendix D, see page 87

Perhaps no more conclusive proof of the sources from which the Gospels derived could be presented than the fate which befell the third Gospel of our present canon. Had it not been for the fierce polemics who sought to defend the doctrines then established in the creed of Christendom we might have been ignorant of the evolution of that narrative into its present form. We owe it not to the enemies of Christianity but to its stoutest defenders that we now know Luke's evangel gradually developed from a primitive form to its present model.[4] It was such protagonists of the faith as Tertullian and Epiphanius in the third or fourth centuries of the current era who revealed to us this curious process. For we now know that there was an earlier gospel than any of the three Synoptics, which may, indeed, have been the first of all the written Gospels, on which their own narratives may have been founded.

This gospel is called that of Marcion, which was never designated as ''the gospel according to Marcion,'' following the rubric of the canonical formula; but merely ''The Gospel,'' as if to indicate its supreme authenticity and genuineness.

The church authorities found it necessary to destroy it utterly, leaving not a vestige except such as may be discovered in the writings that were launched against it in fierce denunciation. There must, of course, have been some very serious cause for such a procedure; inasmuch as the church never assumed a similar attitude toward the apochryphal gospels which they not only suffered to exist, but even at one epoch honored with authority. Such a situation demands study if we are to trace the possible sources from which the canonical writings descended.

First let us attend to the personality and office of this Marcion. He was no upstart or pretender; he prevailed in the province of Pontus between 130 and 180. He was said to have been a wealthy pagan shipowner and to have been converted

[3] Fraser's *Golden Bough: The Dying God*, p. 73.

[4] See authorities reaching this conclusion in *Supernatural Religion*, Vol. II., pp. 137–147.

to Christianity; some say his father was a Christian Bishop in Pontus before his conversion. After the church refused to accept his interpretation of the teachings of Jesus he went to Rome and established a church of his own, and this became so powerful many branches were established. The schism had grown so strong that from 150 to 250 A. D. it seriously endangered the establishment of the Catholic Church. Marcion is supposed to have died about 165, or thereabout, but the Marcionites continued to exist, only gradually being absorbed in the Manichæan sect, until the seventh century, when the distinct doctrines of Marcion disappeared from popular instruction. Thus we see that Marcion is no inconsiderable character to be reckoned with when we seek the sources of the Gospel narratives.

Of course, his enemies denounced him as a falsifier and a cheat, insisting that he mutilated the Gospel of Luke in order to bring it into harmony with his teachings. Around this allegation, by such authors as Epiphanius and Tertullian, a controversy has raged even down to our own times.

But many of the highest and most erudite orthodox authorities refuse to accept the statements of the theologians of those times who opposed Marcion. Canon Westcott says: "Marcion's texts must be considered as various readings of the greatest interest, dating as they do from a time anterior to all other authorities in our possession." And as to the charge that he altered the texts he had discovered to suit his own theology, as set forth by his opponents at the time, Westcott says: "Tertullian and Epiphanius agree in affirming that Marcion altered the texts of the books which he received to suit his own views; and they quote many readings in support of the assertion. Those which they quote, . . . are certainly insufficient to prove the point; on the contrary they go far to show that Marcion preserved without alteration the text he found in his manuscript." (Westcott, *The Canon,* p. 274.)

The contention of the orthodox critics is to the effect that Luke's Gospel existed before Marcion's and that the latter is an intentional mutilation of the former for the purpose of upholding his own peculiar views with scriptural authority. This contention began, as we have seen, way back in the third century. But, as Canon Westcott declares, Marcion's text was undoubtedly the original one from which in the course of time

the Lukan Gospel was developed. The fact is, as critics now admit, Marcion knew nothing at all of any of the Gospels as we now have them and makes no reference whatsoever to them. This would indicate as Westcott suggests that it was an original text from which the others derived.

"There is no evidence whatever," says the author of *Supernatural Religion,* "that Marcion had any knowledge of the other canonical Gospels in any form." Again he says: "The statement of the Fathers that Marcion's gospel was no original work, but a mutilated version of Luke, is unsupported by a single historical or critical argument, and was based merely on their ecclesiastical theory that, being a canonical work adopted by the Church, Luke's Gospel must be the older work. Marcion's gospel is the oldest evangelical work of which we hear anything, and it ranks far above our third Synoptic in this respect. There is no evidence that it was not one of the numerous gospels in circulation before our third Synoptic was written, and *out of which that gospel itself grew*" (P. 139).

The words I have italicized undoubtedly touch the sore spot in the attitude of orthodox critics. They are unwilling to allow the priority of Marcion's gospel because in so many particulars it is inconsistent with the purport as well as the text of the third Synoptic (Luke), although bearing a closer analogy to it than the two other Synoptics. In the most recent times the whole controversy has been revived and it is assumed by orthodox critics that the decision has finally been reached that Luke is the original and Marcion is the mutilated copy. This has been attained chiefly by Dr. Sanday who by a linguistic comparison of the two finds that the texts in each run perfectly parallel; therefore the total omission of the first four chapters of Luke and the story of the prodigal son, etc., by Marcion was, he contends, a clear demonstration that he knew the text of the third Synoptic and treated it to make it accord with his own views. Such is the substance of Dr. Sanday's argument. But this seems to be a weak deduction, for that the parallelism exists between the two save only in the omission of the first chapters and other texts of Luke could as well indicate that Luke himself added those chapters, or whatever scribe of the Church it was who wrote the Lukan text did so, years after the prior text of Marcion was published.

The fact that Marcion existed in a far outpost of Asia Minor, which was little in touch with the Western World, would seem to be in his favor of having the original text, which he does not in any way claim to have written himself, but to have found and promulgated.

If, as is assumed by orthodox critics, Marcion's text is not the original but a mutilation of Luke's, we may well ask why did Marcion utilize only Luke's Gospel which appeared later than Mark and Matthew, and which, even in his own text, allowed statements to remain that conflicted with his own views. If he were going to mutilate any previous gospel in order to fix it into his own system, he certainly would not have permitted texts to remain which were contrary to his own ideas. "So imperfectly did Marcion do the work he is supposed to have undertaken that he is refuted out of his own (alleged) manipulated document. This might well be the case if he had evolved his system out of a gospel independently composed, and which in the main seemed to support him, but not in a work upon which he had felt able freely to use the knife.

"On examination it is found that he omits what is favorable (to his views), retains what is contradictory, and actually interpolates passages contrary to his own principles. A more senseless and absurd proceeding, judged by actual facts, was never ascribed to an able man." The fact, also not to be overlooked, is that if he did indeed mutilate only the third Synoptic, but suffered other gospels, such especially as Matthew's, to prevail without manipulation, he must have known that these would rise to confute what he insisted were the true teachings of Jesus. The only logical deduction must be that he knew nothing of either the earlier or the latest of the Synoptics; as surely he knew nothing of the fourth Gospel. These all were evidently not yet in existence at the time he wrote. This palpably logical deduction must, of course, throw the actual dates of all the Gospels far forward from what is commonly supposed; for Marcion did not live before the first quarter of the second century. This irrefutable conclusion is undoubtedly the reason why orthodox authorities are insistent on the truthfulness of the Fathers of the Church who opposed him and declared that he had mutilated the alleged previously existing Gospel according to Luke. Once admit the priority of Marcion's text, then not one of the canonical Gospels could have existed before about 150 A. D. But the ten epistles of St.

Paul, whose existence Marcion acknowledged, must have already been long extant and well known.[5]

Appendix E, see page 157

Because of the fact that the original manuscript which Marcion (130–165 A. D.) is said to have discovered, of what he called "The Gospel," was completely destroyed by the Fathers of the Church, and we can know nothing of its contents save as we are furnished with a few uncertain quotations from it by Marcion's adversaries, we are not, of course, permitted to know whether that text bore out the radical doctrines of Marcion, as exhibited in his treatise, *Antithesis,* or whether he taught a doctrine contrary to the gospel he discovered. But because of the intense opposition to him and his virtual excommunication, and the further fact that the text was regarded as so obnoxious that it called for utter annihilation, it would seem that the text must in some respects, at least, have sustained his contentions.

It is noteworthy, therefore, that in his *Antithesis* he presents the personality of Jesus not as a corporeal historic character, one who in the flesh actually endured the experiences narrated in the gospel, but as a phantom figure who acted out a drama of purely metaphysical elements. Precisely as the pagan deities were conceived not as corporeal realities but spiritual forces metaphorically impersonated to achieve certain ends, so did Marcion conceive that Jesus was in no sense an actual personality in the flesh but a mental abstraction subjectively realized by His votaries. "Marcion ardently maintained the doctrine of the impurity of matter, and he carried it to its logical conclusion, both in speculation and practice. He, therefore, asserted the incredibility of an incarnate God,[6]

[5] For an exhaustive presentation of the arguments pro and con relative to the issue concerning the validity and genuineness of Marcion's "Gospel" see *Supernatural Religion,* Vol. II., ch. vii.

[6] "If God were to metamorphose Himself, He would assume a more or less perfect form. But it is ridiculous to say that He would change Himself into a more perfect form, for then there would be something more perfect than He is, which is absurd. It is impious to admit that He would change Himself into something less perfect, for God cannot degrade Himself. Besides if He were to appear in any other shape than His own, He would lie, because He would then appear to be that which He is not. We must therefore conclude that He remains in His own simple form, which is

denied the corporeal reality of the flesh of Christ. His body was a mere semblance and not of human substance, was not born of a human mother, and the divine nature was not degraded by contact with flesh."

The further fact that "Marcion finds in Paul the purest promulgator of the truth as he understands it, and embodied by the Epistle to the Galatians," as the author of *Supernatural Religion* informs us, would seem to indicate that the original conception of the Christ in the inculcation of Paul's doctrine was not that of an actual historical character but a mere metaphysical semblance; and that only after some hundred and fifty years, ingenious propagandists constructed out of the elements of the Paulinian Epistles the narratives presented in the canonical Gospels. If Marcion's teachings reflect the gospel text which he is said to have discovered, then evidently in the time which he lived, long before the canonical Gospels were known to exist, certain scribes had already begun to formulate a story of the Christ built up from the intimations contained in the Epistles of Paul. But on Marcion's own showing, the story was recognized as having no actual historical validity, but was to be understood as a dramatization of a metaphysical ideal. If that were not so, then how could Marcion have conceived of the incorporeality of the Christ, and denied His human incarnation? And if this were not the original interpretation of the primitive gospel text and of what Paul was supposed to have inculcated, then why should Marcion have regarded Paul as the great protagonist of the doctrine which he himself was promulgating? [7]

It is admitted by critics that Marcion was entirely ignorant of any of the Gospels in the canonical books. As Marcion lived as late as 165 A. D. (some think he did not die till 180 A. D.) it becomes apparent that none of the canonical Gospels could have appeared up to the time of his death. Hence as late as that date apparently the general notion of Christ, after the teachings of Paul, if we are to trust Marcion,[8] was not that of an historical

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beauty and perfection." (Excerpt from Plato's *Republic* quoted in *The Gospels Critically Examined*, Longmans, Green & Co.)

This Platonic argument seems consonant with Marcion's conception of the alleged incarnation, and doubtless was the prevalent notion of the great philosophers of Athens and the Grecian world of culture.

[7] See *Supernatural Religion*, Vol. II., p. 107.

[8] That Marcion's "gospel" represented Jesus as a mere semblance and not a physical reality note this text: Luke xxiv: 39 reads: "Handle me and

person but purely a metaphysical conception, actually incorporeal, yet concerning whom a legend of incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection was popularly believed, as among pagans it was also believed relative to their deities.

Appendix F, see page 182

In this innovation we may discover the entering wedge of Paul's paganistic revolutionary doctrine. It is an error to assume that the performance of so-called "mighty works" (on which Paul so frequently animadverts) was original with him or with the founders of Christianity. For ages we have been inculcated with the notion that the performance of miracles by the early Christians was proof of the genuineness of the doctrines which they taught and of the New Testament's revelation from on high. But the fact is that many ages before the introduction of Christianity the performance of so-called miraculous deeds, such as healing, raising from the dead and other "mighty works," was already an old story and in this respect Christianity was merely a duplication or imitation of what was an ancient system among the pagans. Such deeds were ascribed to Bacchus, Mithra, Osiris, Asklepios (Æsculapius) and others. Modern Christianity is being gradually forced to recognize this fact. In Dr. Shirley Case's recent book, *Jesus,* he concedes certain supposed supernatural phenomena as achievements of the pagan gods or demigods, which must be a shock to those who have so long accepted the traditional views.

He says: "Hosts of people in the Gentile world revered gods who had been and still were abundant in 'mighty works.' But of all the marvellous displays the healing of diseases was the most highly esteemed. Among the Greeks Asklepios was widely famed for therapeutic activity. . . . The chief sanctuary of Asklepios, the 'Holy Epidaurus' a few miles southeast of Corinth, attracted invalids from all about the Mediterranean world. . . . The miracles of healing performed at the shrines of Asklepios were of many varieties. Blindness, lameness and paralysis were very common ailments to receive successful

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see me; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see me have." But the parallel text in Marcion reads: "a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see I have not." (See Taylor's *Diegesis,* p. 369, for the Greek text *in loc.*)

treatment. Grateful suppliants left behind abundant evidences of their appreciation in the form of crutches, canes and votive offerings, not to mention the more substantial expressions of their gratitude necessary for the maintenance of the institution. . . . If too ill to visit Epidaurus one might send prayers for help, or a friend might seek information from the deity. . . . An air of sanctity pervaded the place, even though there were many human agencies evident in the operation of the insitution. On entering the vestibule of the temple a visitor was greeted with the admonition: 'Only he who is pure may cross the threshold of the fragrant temple, but no one is pure who is not holy in thought.' " . . . Again in a footnote on page 350 (referring to Origen's *Celsus*) Dr. Case says: "In early Christian art the resemblance between the pictures of Jesus and Asklepios were often striking. The latter was also reputed to have saved many persons from death by stretching out his hand to them when threatened by storms at sea. An inscription of the year 212 A. D. refers to the 'sacred assembly of the Savior Asklepios!' "

It seems strange that Dr. Case would dare to say so much and yet say no more. Nevertheless he tells us enough to let even the dull discern the subtle origin of many of the incidents mentioned in the Gospel "lives" of Jesus, especially those relative to His healing powers, which in some cases seem to be but duplications of those once attributed to Asklepios.

As we study the New Testament narratives we can almost point out the places where the introduction of the supernatural therapeutic innovations of Paul enters, and cannot restrain our amazement when we learn that many similar supernatural acts or "mighty works" had long before been attributed to heathen deities.

In the case of Asklepios there seems to be a curious attestation of his deeds in the material evidence presented by his patients, as Dr. Case informs us. Had there been a single iota of evidence of this nature to assure mankind of the verity of the achievements of Jesus, how great an ado would not have been made. No canes or crutches, no votive offerings of any kind are vouchsafed mankind to confirm their belief in the miraculous achievements of that Jesus whom Paul proclaimed, and whose apostle he himself claims to be by virtue of that which constitutes the outstanding sign of an apostle, namely the performance of "mighty works."

Appendix G, see page 238

It is curious with what tenacity an error will prevail when convention invites. Almost all modern commentators take for granted that the translation of Acts xviii: 25–26, both in the King James and the Revised Versions is correct and properly conveys the thought involved in the original Greek. According to this translation we read: "Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by race, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught accurately the things concerning *Jesus*, knowing only the baptism of John." As already shown in the discussion of this passage it is a mistranslation. It is therefore quite astonishing to find so authentic a scholar as F. J. Foakes-Jackson, falling into the trap and misrepresenting the words of Scripture. In his *Life of St. Paul*, p. 160, he follows the current translation that Apollos "taught accurately the things concerning Jesus." But the original Greek admits of no such translation. The Greek words are: Elalei kai edidasken akribos ta peri tou Kuriou": he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning *the Lord* (not Jesus). Up to the time of his meeting Paul Apollos had known and recognized John the Baptist as the Messiah; and he was preaching the doctrine of the Scriptures that related to the coming of this Messiah. His words, according to Bloomfield (Greek Testament with English Notes, *in loc.*) had reference to "that part of God's plan for the salvation of man by a Redeemer, as it regarded the doctrine and methods of John the Baptist, which enjoined repentance and reformation, and being baptized into the faith of a future Messiah; . . . while by the more *accurate instruction* which he received from Aquila and Priscilla must be understood that of the Messiahship of Jesus, and what He enjoined for faith and practice in order to the attainment of everlasting salvation."

This is so palpably the correct implication of the Greek text, which was so long ago detected by accurate scholars, that one is not a little shocked to find modern scholars carelessly following the current translations.

In the light of this manifest fact we find Dr. Foakes-Jackson falling into another error: "we may surmise" he says, "that Apollos' teaching about the Messiah rested upon an interpreta-

tion of prophecy similar to that adopted by the followers of Jesus, and that Priscilla and Aquila, in conjunction with Paul, had a considerable share in bringing the Messianism of the Baptist into line with the followers of Jesus.''

The fact seems to be the other way around: Apollos knew nothing of Jesus and only of the Baptist; Paul, it is apparent persuaded him to become instrumental in ''bringing the Messianism of the Baptist into line with the followers of Jesus'' for the simple reason that Paul's ardent enthusiasm in enunciating his doctrine of the ''mystery of godliness,'' embodied in the person he called Jesus, of whom Apollos had never heard, completely overwhelmed him, and, because, after the conquest of Jerusalem by Titus, all the great orthodox parties of the Jews (the Essenes, the Therapeutæ, the Sadducees) had faded into obscurity. And as these great parties had swiftly dissolved doubtless the Messianists of the Baptist persuasion were also declining; when, therefore Apollos discovered the virility and aggressiveness of the new Messianic party of Jesus, inaugurated by Saul of Tarsus, or St. Paul, he was easily persuaded by Paul and his co-workers to espouse their cause and accept the new Messiahship of Jesus.

Appendix H, see page 262

It is an undisputed fact that previous to the advent of the Christian Era the world was already filled with stories of a virgin-born Savior, who suffered death at the hands of His enemies and rose again from the grave after burial. It seems to be evident that by a slow process these age-known legends attributed to Attis, or Adonis, or Mithra, and numerous other savior-gods, came to be referred to the hero of the Gospels; but that when the first or Markan Gospel was published the attribution of these mystic legends had not yet been clearly foisted on the great hero who came to be known as the supreme and absolute Savior of mankind.

It is remarkable that the chief elements of the death and resurrection epic were already fully incorporated in that very ancient religion known as the cult of Mithra. While their origin in the Mithraic legend has not yet been fully divulged, yet by the reading of the monuments and the symbolism of the Mithræa (cave temples dedicated to Mithra) enough has al-

ready been discovered to enable scholars to discern the broad outlines of the noble epic in that ancient religion. In the Mithraic drama or masquerade the slaying of the god and his return to life are clearly evidenced in the states through which the novitiate must pass to attain union with the deity. In his little book on Mithraism, W. J. Phythian-Adams describes the worship of the Mithraists, somewhat imaginative perhaps, yet deduced from the symbols which recently discovered monuments reveal. He says: "We are standing now at the very door of the Mithraic sanctuary, and we may say as we have said at the beginning, that our present knowledge does not admit us to a full participation of the mysteries enacted within. Something indeed may be gleaned from the characters who pass in and out from the sacred masquerade, and something again, . . . from the least expected of all quarters, the unwitting testimony of their Christian enemies. From these two sources we may in some measure reconstruct the spirit and message of the Mithraic mysteries; and we shall see that however much there is in them which appears to us grotesque and puerile there can be no doubt that they taught at least one Reality and enshrined one Eternal Truth."

Referring then to the spiritual stages through which the novitiate must pass to attain union with the Pater Patrum (father of fathers) and everlasting bliss, he continues: "Yet before the neophyte had climbed to his spiritual eminence a last and greatest trial of his fortitude and fidelity still awaited him.

"By his previous tests he had partially accomplished the act of spiritualization, and since then by continual purification had brought his body, thus subdued, into a condition of preparedness for the supreme moment of transmutation. Now he had to DIE! That the Mithraic mysteries contained a Mystical Death, . . . is a fact that is practically undeniable. Tertullian speaks of an 'image of resurrection' which the devil had introduced into the Mithraic rites with the object of overthrowing and contaminating the truth. The other side of the same ritual act is fortunately preserved for us by the chronologist of Commodus. That Emperor we are told 'polluted the Mysteries of Mithras by a real homicide, when something of the kind is done or spoken there to produce a terror.' "

Again, Phythian-Adams says: "We have followed the

neophyte to the moment of his mystical death. He 'rose,' he was 'born again.' ''

Thus we see in a vague manner, yet with profound suggestiveness, the mystical cult of Mithra centuries before the advent of the Christian Savior had already dimly foreshadowed the teachings and esoteric principles of Christianity. Yet so involved were they in allegory and undefinable symbolism that they remain, at this late day, as little more than vague anticipations or adumbrations of that great ''mystery of godliness'' which the immortal Apostle to the Gentiles boldly and defiantly set forth in full and complete exposition.

''One thing, however,'' says Phythian-Adams, ''is certain for we have it from the lips of the Imperial Initiate himself (Emperor Julian). There existed a well defined body of Injunctions; and by following these and clinging to his father Mithras as a sure cable and a haven of safety, the faithful devotee might be certain of reaching the Everlasting Bliss; for as Mithras was Judge of the Dead, so also was he the Protector of the Living, and the Guide of departing Souls.''

Thus far our reference has been to the primal phases of Mithraism as revealed by archæological research in translating the symbolism of the monuments. But when the religion traveled westward and became syncretized with Egyptian, Babylonian, Zoroastrian and Roman elements, the vague theological intimations above referred to become more clearly set forth. J. M. Robertson in his *Pagan Christs* presents a lengthy and revealing study of the evolution of Mithraism as it passed through many stages. On page 291 he says ''It is after the Persian conquest of Babylon (B. C. 538) that Mithraism begins to take the shape it wears in the period of the Roman Empire. . . . Though historical details are lacking, we are broadly entitled to say that 'the Mazdeism of the Persians, in uniting with the astrolatry of the Chaldæans, produced Mithraism.' '' From that period Mithra becomes more than merely ''the animized Sun; later, according to the universal law of religious evolution, he becomes a spirit apart from the sun but symbolized by it, the sun being worshipped in his name, and he being the god who sustains it. . . . At length, after Mithra comes to be regarded as Mediator between the powers of good and evil (Ormand and Ahriman) and figuring to the devout eye as a humane and beneficent God, nearer to man than the Great Spirit of Good, a Savior, a Redeemer, eternally young, Son of

the Most High and preserver of mankind from the evil one," the feature of the death and resurrection of the god becomes the central doctrine of the cult. It is found thereafter in all the ancient religions. "The Christian Firmicus wrathfully tells us how the priests of Osiris, who have a representation of the God in the most secret part of their temples, mourn for a certain number of days, while professedly searching for the scattered members of his mangled body, till at length they feign to have found it, when they finish their mourning and rejoice, saying 'We have found him: rejoice.' And we learn from Tertullian that Osiris in the mysteries was buried and came to life again. . . . But as to Mithraism the details are still more precise. The worshippers, Firmicus tells us, lay a stone image by night on a bier and liturgically mourn for it, this image representing the dead god. This symbolical corpse is then placed in the tomb, and after a time is withdrawn, whereupon the worshippers rejoice, exhorting one another to be of good hope; lights are brought in; and the priest anoints the throats of the devotees murmuring slowly: 'Be of good courage; ye have been instructed in the mysteries, and ye shall have salvation from your sorrows.' . . . In view of the duplication of the motive on all hands, in the cults of Osiris, Attis, Adonis, Dionysus, it is impossible to doubt that we are dealing with a universal myth." [9]

Considering the fact that sometimes in the liturgical worship of this ancient cult an actual human being (as reported of Commodus) was utilized to represent the god and was murdered literally and, probably, the members of his body scattered to be found in the mystical search, we are not surprised at the language of Herodotus, the historian, who had been initiated in the Egyptian and Grecian "Mysteries": "At Sais, in Egypt, in the sacred precinct of Minerva, behind the chapel and adjoining the wall, is the tomb of one whose name I consider it impious to divulge on such an occasion . . . there is a lake near; in this lake they perform by night the representation of that person's adventures, which they call *mysteries*. Of these matters, however, though accurately acquainted with the particulars of them, I must *observe a discrete silence.*" [10]

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[9] *Pagan Christs*, pp. 293, 294, 306, 307.

[10] Bk. II., chs. 170, 171; see also Doane's *Parallels*.

Appendix I, see page 268

"Such appears to have been the annual solemnization of the death and resurrection of Attis in the Spring. But besides these public rites his worship is known to have comprised certain secret or mystic ceremonies, which probably aimed at bringing the worshipper, and especially the novice, into closer communion with his god. . . . The fast which accompanied the mourning for the dead god may perhaps have been designed to prepare the body of the communicant for the reception of the Blessed Sacrament by purging it of all that could defile by contact the sacred elements. In the baptism the devout, crowned with gold and wreathed with fillets, descended into the pit, the mouth of which was covered with a wooden grating. A bull, adorned with garlands of flowers, its forehead glittering with gold leaf, was then driven onto the grating, and there stabbed to death with a consecrated spear. Its hot, reeking blood poured in torrents through the apertures, and was received with devout eagerness by the worshipper on every part of his person and garments, till he emerged from the pit, drenched, dripping and scarlet from head to foot, to receive the homage, nay, the adoration, of his fellows as one who had been born again to eternal life and had washed away his sins in the blood of the bull. For some time afterwards the fiction of a new birth was kept up by dieting him on milk like a new born babe. . . . At Rome the new birth and the remission of sins by the shedding of the bull's blood appear to have been carried out above all at the sanctuary of the Phrygian goddess on the Vatican Hill, at or near the spot where the great basilica of St. Peter's now stands; for many inscriptions relating to the rites were found when the church was being enlarged in 1608 and 1609." (*Adonis, Attis, Osiris,* Frazer, p. 229.)

There are curious resemblances between these rites and those intimated in Paul's words "Being justified by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." [11] "Now justified by his blood shall we be saved." [12] "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ?" [13] "In whom we have our redemption through his

[11] Rom. iii: 25.
[12] Rom. v: 9.
[13] I Cor. x: 16.

blood."[14] "All things are cleansed with blood, and apart from the shedding of blood there is no remission."[15]

Echoes of this ancient pagan doctrine of blood, and being buried in the baptism of, in pagan times, the *bull's* blood, or in Christian times, the *lamb's* blood, are still heard in such modern hymns as,

> There is a fountain filled with blood
> Drawn from Emmanuel's veins.

Doubtless devotees of Christ little realize that subconsciously they are revealing the probably pagan source of such consecration when they repeat the words of Paul or dilate upon the doctrine of the atonement.

Appendix J, see page 270

In this age of intelligence and comparative freedom from superstition it may sound absurd to assert that Paul could have conceived that the Galilean Jesus, who suffered the death of a rebel on the Cross, was really the embodiment and "image of God," of whose existence he claims he was informed by revelation. It was not customary, it is true, in Jewish annals, to bestow divinity upon human beings; for Jehovah was unapproachable and even unnameable. However something like the conception of an incarnation of the Deity prevailed among the Hebrew mystics, who wrote the apocalyptic books, one of which is contained in the Old Testament, and known as the Book of Daniel. In that alleged prophetic effusion we find the expression "the Ancient of Days." This was recognized as an appellation of the Deity in a somewhat disguised form. Literally it means the "aged one, or the most aged one." From this expression the rabbis deduced the appearance of God as "a venerable sage invested with judicial authority." This anthropomorphism easily became confused with a phase of incarnation which depicted God as existing in human forms. As one learned rabbi, commenting on Exodus xv: 3, remarks: "When (the Ancient of Days), represented as a warrior triumphant in battle, God appears as a fiery young hero; and in an assembly

[14] Eph. i: 7.
[15] Heb. ix. 22.

of the wise who seek truth and justice, He is depicted as a venerable sage, calm and majestic.'' [16]

Thus we see the humanization of Deity was already vaguely conceived among the Jewish mystics. Paul, therefore, would keep well within the periphery of rabbinical lore, by conceiving that the Deity, metaphysically expressed in the Christ, may have descended in a human form, replete with the wisdom of the Infinite. This notion, vaguely intimated in the Zohar and other mystical books, would, however, in Paul's mind probably have been reinforced by his intimate acquaintance with pagan mythology, wherein the gods often became incarnate and lived the career of human beings. That it was no uncommon thing for these pagans to regard mortals as actual deities is well exemplified in the incident where Paul and Barnabas were hailed at Lystra as incarnations of Jupiter and Mercury.[17]

In fact this disposition continued to prevail even among Christians in later epochs. ''In the second century Montanus, the Phrygian, claimed to be the incarnate Trinity, uniting in his single person God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. Nor was this an isolated case. From the earliest times down to the present day many sects have believed that Christ, nay, God Himself, is incarnate in every initiated Christian, and they carried the belief to its logical conclusion by adoring each other. Tertullian records that this was done to his fellow Christians at Carthage in the second century. The disciples of Columba worshipped him as the embodiment of Christ, and in the eighth century Epidaurus of Toledo spoke of Christ as 'a god among gods,' meaning that all believers were gods just as truly as Jesus Christ Himself.'' [18]

In such an age it would, therefore, by no means be impossible that Paul could easily convince the first followers of the Nazarene, that Jesus was, indeed, not merely an ordinary prophet, or a Jewish rebel hanged on a cross by the Romans, but truly the very embodiment of the Almighty, who had sent Him as the incarnation of Himself, ''whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds, who being the effulgence of his glory and the very image of his substance, . . . sat down on the right hand of his Majesty on high.'' [19]

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[16] *Jewish Encyclopedia*, art. "Ancient of Days."
[17] Acts xiv: 11, 12.
[18] *Magic Art*, Frazer, p. 407.
[19] Hebrews i: 1–4.

As Frazer, speaking of incarnations which in other times seemed so natural to men, well says: "In a society where every human being is supposed to be endowed more or less with powers which we would call supernatural, it is plain that the distinction between gods and men is blurred. The conception of gods as superhuman beings endowed with powers to which man possesses nothing comparable in degree and hardly in kind, has been slowly evolved in the course of history." [20]

Who can therefore doubt that in an age possessed of such imaginative and credulous psychology, Paul himself might easily have become convinced on learning from the first apostles of the Nazarene about His noble life and willing sacrifice, that He was indeed the concrete incarnation of that spiritual vision which up to that moment Paul had conceived of merely as an abstract or metaphysical ideal; and that henceforth he proclaimed himself "a servant of Jesus (as the) Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, which he promised afore through his prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David, according to the flesh; who was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." [21]

In fact this very statement of Paul seems to involve the notion that the Man of Galilee, who had been killed on the "accursed tree" as a rebel against Rome, in which capacity the original apostles alone had known Him before Paul's arrival, was conceived by him to be "Jesus Christ our Lord, born of the seed of David according to the flesh," and glorified "by the resurrection from the dead." This notion apparently was unknown to the first apostles, as I have previously shown, until Paul superimposed it on them, and Peter in the first assembly of the followers of the Galilean after His death, seems to disclose the fact by exclaiming to his bewildered hearers: "*This* Jesus did God raise up. . . . Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God hath made *him* both Lord and Christ, *this Jesus* whom ye crucified." (Italics mine.)

Language could scarcely more clearly indicate that this was a new doctrine; that the man whom they had thus far known only as a condemned and slain prophet was henceforth by their faith to be conceived as transfigured into the Incarnate and to

[20] *Magic Art*, Frazer, p. 373.
[21] Rom. i: 1–5.

be contemplated not only as a Messiah (or Christ) but as the Lord of Hosts Himself expressed in human form.

In this speech Peter echoed Paul's revolutionary conception which ever since has been the corner stone of Christian faith.

Appendix J, see page 290

The nearest approach which I have found to the thesis developed in this treatise (which, permit me to say, I had found only after I had completed this book) is in *The Apostle Paul and the Modern World,* F. G. Peabody, and I take the liberty, therefore, of presenting a long quotation from it to inform the general reader of the vast advance which has been made in modern interpretation of the origin of Christianity: "Nor is this the only difficulty with which one is confronted when he proposes to derive the essential truths of the Christian religion from the teaching of Paul. For behind the transition in which, as has been lately said, 'the preaching of repentance into the Kingdom of God begun by Jesus, passed into the sacramental cult of the Lord Jesus Christ,' there is conspicuous in writings of Paul himself a formative influence which is not only independent of the Gospel story but which is not even Christian in its origin. Throughout the Roman world in Paul's time had spread the doctrines and practices known as 'Mysteries.' . . . The symbolism of these mystery religions was in certain aspects uniform. All were dramas of redemption, plans of salvation, ways of purgation. In all, the supreme being descended into human life, which in its turn became divine. Degrees of initiation, baptism by water, a mystical meal for the privileged—all these were familiar incidents in Oriental cults. 'The death and resurrection of the savior-god—Attis, Serapis, Adonis, etc.—were dramatically exhibited before the eyes of the assembled worshippers, with every circumstance that could touch the imagination and excite the feelings. . . . The neophyte died with the god to his material and mortal existence, and rose with him to new life divine and immortal.' 'Whatever name they bear, their ultimate aim was identical—to raise the soul above the transience of perishable matter to an immortal life through actual union with the Divine.'

". . . The acceptance of Mithraism became so widespread as to lead Renan to surmise: 'One might say that if the expansion of Christianity had been arrested by some mortal

disease the world would have been Mithraist. . . . Mithraism had its baptism, its eucharist, its love feasts, its penitence, its expiations, its anointings. Its chapels resembled small churches. It created a bond of fraternity among the initiated.'

''Into this bewildering multiplicity and ceremonial Paul was born. 'The mysteries and the religious societies which were akin to the mysteries existed on an enormous scale throughout the eastern part of the Empire'; and the elaborate rites and mythologies of these redemptive dramas must have been familiar in Paul's city of Tarsus. Even his training in the rigid monotheism of Jerusalem could not detach his mind from these dramatic pictures of redemption; and when he returned from the prolonged reflections on the new faith to which his vision called him, his vocabulary bore the marks of sympathetic familiarity with the mysteries, and, with a constantly increasing emphasis, his teaching becomes that of a redemptive plan. He discriminates like an adept between types of character which are carnal, natural, spiritual; he writes as one might report of the ritual of Osiris or Mithra, that 'If we have been planted together in the likeness of death we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.' The dominant word of his message becomes that of the mysteries, salvation. He prays for a door of utterance, to speak 'the mystery of Christ.' He is a 'steward of the mysteries of God.' '' Then the author quotes from *Les Mystères Païens et le Mystère Chrétian* by A. Loisy (the priest who was excommunicated by the Roman Catholic Church in the nineteenth century), as follows: 'It was to the Christian mysteries, not to the Gospel of Jesus, that the ancient world was converted, or could be converted. The ancient world would never have consented to become Jewish. Instead of changing the Gospel, as is often said, the mystery saved the Gospel, by making it a relatively universal religion . . . a religion independent of Judaism, a scheme of universal salvation'' (pp. 29–33).

However, while authors like Peabody, Kennedy, Lake and Deissmann often admit the fact of the influence of these mysteries on the origin of Christianity, they refuse to go the length of Loisy and subscribe to the language of Kersopp Lake who declares, ''I am certainly not a disciple of Loisy.'' [22]

Notwithstanding the startling admission of these Christian

[22] *The Religion of Yesterday and Tomorrow*, p. 140.

radicals as to the true origin of Christianity, its essential paganism, its paraphrase and absorption of the ancient mysteries, what I claim as original in this present work, is that herein I have traced minutely the detailed stages through which Paul passed in arriving at his "revelation"; and especially the apparent historic method by which he succeeded in overthrowing and submerging the pragmatic teachings of the Galilean Jesus and establishing a religion which he clothed in Judaic or cabalistic phraseology but acquired wholly from the Eleusinian, Mithraic and other pagan mystery religions. But if the Galilean Jesus is really out of the picture and Paul occupies the entire space within the frame of Christianity, why continue to insist that Christianity, as we know it historically, is the religion of Jesus? Why not be honest and say Paul simply used the name of Jesus with which to conjure that he might overthrow Judaism and give the world a universal religion, which indeed has relatively conquered mankind? The surprising thing is, as I have shown in this treatise, the New Testament Scriptures themselves, especially the Epistles and The Acts, make the story (of this adoption by Paul of the *name* of Jesus, void of the Galilean's teaching, as an expedient and diplomatic procedure by which to inaugurate his gigantic campaign) so plain that one wonders it has not long ago been detected.

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